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THE  
PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY  
AS TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE;  
BEING  
SEVEN DISCOURSES  
ON  
OUR LOST STATE IN ADAM,  
OUR  
RECOVERY BY JESUS CHRIST,  
AND THE NECESSITY OF  
REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION  
BY THE  
HOLY GHOST,  
TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
THREE LETTERS  
TO A  
CLERGYMAN

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C L E R G Y M A N.

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By THOMAS BOWMAN, M. A.  
Vicar of Martham, Norfolk.

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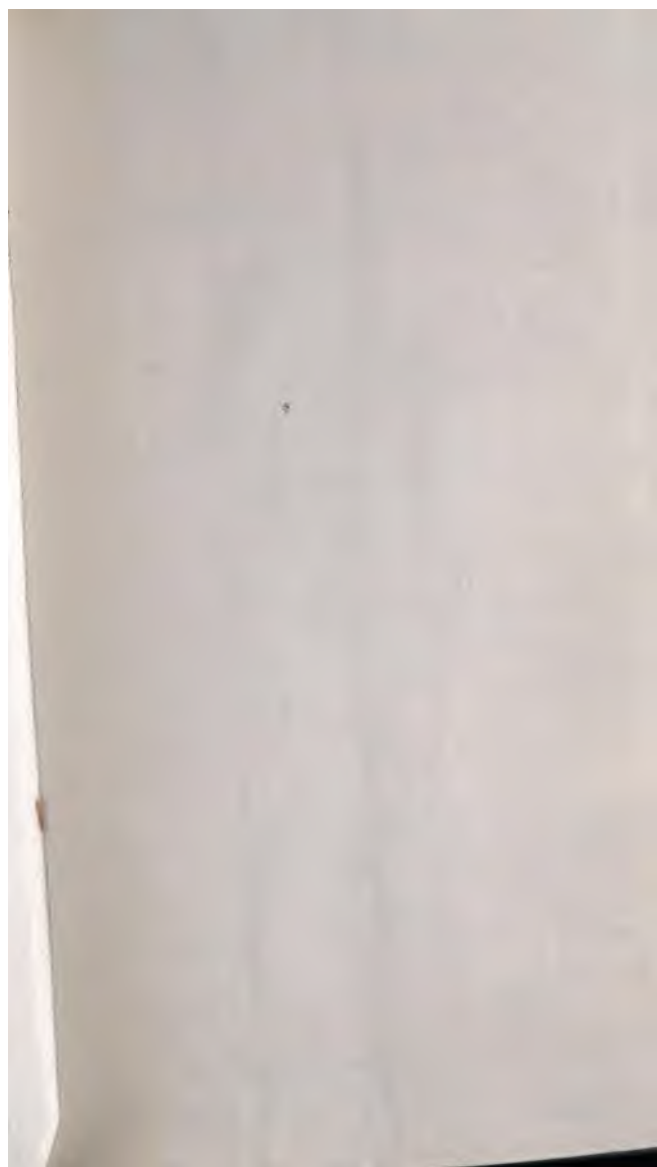
The Fourth Edition, with many Additions.

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M. DCC. XC.







## THE PRINCIPLES

life—that we must be renewed by the Holy Ghost, before we can lead a life of holiness—and that, unless we are thus born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Of these doctrines, you have grossly expressed your disapprobation ; frequently and openly declaring, that they are false and enthusiastic. A heavy charge this, and coming from a person of your years and character, tends to have weight with, and unhinge the minds of many. It ought, therefore, to have been made good. But you have not, as far as I can learn, offered any reasons to prove them so. You have even refused to make me acquainted with your objections, though I requested to know them with a proper respect. You have refused to meet me, with a friend or two, in order to examine the propriety of what I have advanced. I am therefore constrained to address you in this public manner. For the proof of my opinions, I refer you to the discourses themselves ; in which I have endeavoured to support them by Scripture and Reason ; and shall now chiefly undertake to prove, that they are the doctrines of the established church, of that church of which you call yourself a member, and in which you have long officiated as one of its ministers.

ART.

## OF CHRISTIANITY.

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### ART. IX. *Of original, or birth sin.*

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.”

### ART. X. *Of free-will.*

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”

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ART.

## 4 THE PRINCIPLES.

### ART. XI. *Of the justification of man.*

“ We are accounted righteous before God, *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified *by faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification.”

### ART. XII. *Of good works.*

“ Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgement ; yet they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree is discerned by the fruit.”

### ART. XIII. *Of works before justification.*

“ Works done before the Grace of God, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity ;

gruity; yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

These, Sir, are some of the doctrines of the Church of England, and in them are contained a declaration and acknowledgement of the doctrines I have advanced.—In Art. 9. it is declared, "That we are lost in Adam, and are by nature children of wrath."—Art. 11. peremptorily asserts, "That we can be restored to the favour of God, and made happy hereafter, only by faith in the death and merits of Jesus Christ."—By comparing Art. 9, 10, 12, and 13. you may find, "That we must be renewed by the Holy Ghost, before we can lead a life of holiness; and that, unless we are thus born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." It appears, then, that my opinions, which you have confidently declared to be false and enthusiastic, are some of the doctrines of the established church. But this is not all. Though you now scruple not to declare openly, that they are false and enthusiastic, it is notorious that you once spoke very differently about them. What is more, you once gave it under your hand, that they were true. You could not, indeed, have en-

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tered into the ministry without this ; for it is required of all candidates for the sacred office, and made an indispensable condition of their admission into it. The 36th canon, requiring subscription of such as are to be made ministers, says, " No person shall hereafter be received into the ministry, except he shall first subscribe to these three articles following : " part of the third of which is, " That he alloweth the book of articles, agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the convocation, holden at London, in the year of our Lord, 1562."

It is, indeed, frequently said, that the subscription to the articles may be made with a reserve, as far as they are agreeable to the holy Scriptures ; which amounts to this, " I give it under my hand, that the thirty-nine articles are true, as far as I think they are agreeable to the holy Scriptures." But this is a liberty the subscriber has no warrant to take, and is at best, but a mean evasion. For the latter part of the third article in the 36th canon is, " That he acknowledgeth *all* and *every* the articles therein contained, being in number nine-and-thirty, besides the ratification, *to be agreeable to the Word of God.*" Nor have any persons the liberty of under-  
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standing the articles in what sense they please: for in the declaration prefixed to the thirty-nine articles, it is said, "That no man shall hereafter either print or preach, to draw the article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof; *and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.*" And to prevent all practices of this kind, it is declared by the fifth canon, "Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that any of the nine-and-thirty, agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in convocation, holden in London, in the year of our Lord 1562, for avoiding diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion, are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto; let him be excommunicated ipso facto, and not restored, but only by the archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of such his wicked errors." And in the 36th canon, it is further said, "To these three articles whosoever will subscribe, he shall, for the avoiding of all ambiguities, subscribe in this form of words, setting down both his christian and surname; namely, I, N. N.



do willingly and ex animo subscribe to these three articles abovementioned, and to all things that are contained in them."

Be pleased now to recollect, Sir, ~~that~~ you yourself have performed every part of what is here required of all candidates for the ministry; that is, you have given it under your hand, that you allow of all the thirty-nine articles—that you believe they are agreeable to the word of God—that they are to be understood in the literal and grammatical sense—and that your subscription was willingly and from the heart. After having subscribed to the articles in this strict and solemn manner, how can you reconcile it with integrity and sincerity, to deny, and even ridicule the doctrines of regeneration, and the necessity of the influences of the Holy Ghost? Think, Sir, I beseech you. It can avail you nothing to say, as you generally do, when confronted with the articles, and reminded of your subscription to them, that the articles are erroneous, and want to be altered. How long have they wanted an alteration? If it was before you entered the ministry, how came you to subscribe that they were true? If you have discovered this secret since, what induced you to give it under your hand that they were true, when  
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you did not know whether they were true or false?

But, Sir, it is a mistake in you, to say that they want alteration; and you seldom appear in your public character without discovering it. When you read the office for baptism, you declare before the assembled congregation, “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, *except he be regenerated and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost*; I beseech you to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to this child that thing, which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptised with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ’s holy church, and be made a lively member of the same.” Here is a plain declaration of the two doctrines in question; namely, the absolute necessity of regeneration, and of the influences of the Holy Ghost; and, moreover, a proof that by regeneration we are to understand something more than mere reformation, and that wrought in our own strength; which is the true meaning of the word according to the opinion of many. We may see that it signifies a change of dis-

position, from evil to good, worked in us by the power of the Holy Ghost. And this is confirmed by part of a prayer in the same office, which you have frequently offered to God in behalf of children; "Give thy holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again." It is amazing that you should entirely forget these passages.

You have also been pleased to declare, that the operations of the Holy Ghost, both ordinary and extraordinary, have long since ceased. I pray, Sir, how long? You have made no scruple to say, ever since the beginning of the fourth century; when Christianity being acknowledged by the civil power, under the Emperor Constantine, there was no more occasion for them; for the rule of faith being established, the work of Christianity is to be carried on by the force of reason. If this is true, how happens it, that there is even *one* immoral man in your parish? This implies either a great neglect, or the insufficiency of reason for such a work. Indeed, Sir, there is not the least shadow of argument to support this notion. Scripture, reason, and experience all prove the contrary. The heart of man is the same in all ages. Men are as prone to evil, and as much attached to the things of the world  
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now, as they were in the days of the apostles ; and it requires as strong a power now, as it did then, to change them from evil to good ; to raise their affections from things below, and set them on things above. Multitudes are ready to bear witness, that “ Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God only can give an increase.” But if your opinion is true, how can you possibly reconcile it with some declarations you formerly made ? When you was a candidate for deacon’s orders, this question was put to you : “ Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office,” &c. To this you answered, in plain terms, “ I trust so.” According, therefore, to this declaration, the operations of the Holy Ghost had not ceased thirty years ago ; for you have within that time declared, that you was inwardly moved by him, to take upon you the office of a deacon. But, Sir, I doubt not you have long since the above-mentioned period, acknowledged the necessity of them. If I mistake not, you have, within a month, been heard to say, and that publicly, “ Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that

the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy." [Absolution.] And further solemnly to address God, "That it may please Thee, to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy word." [Liturgy.]

Whenever you catechise the children of your parish, you suffer it to be said, that the inward and spiritual grace of baptism is, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." And when you ask the child what he chiefly learns from the articles contained in the Belief; you do not tell him he is wrong, when he says, among other things, I learn to believe in "God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God."

To deny, therefore, the doctrines of regeneration, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, what is it, but to condemn yourself out of your own mouth? To teach, as truths necessary to salvation, what you believe to be false; to appear before God in behalf of a people; offering up petitions, for which you acknowledge there is no necessity; and pretending to pray for things, which you declare have no existence.

Let our people now judge between us. I readily submit to their determination, who is the  
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the consistent minister, the true son of the church ; you, who have subscribed to these doctrines as true, and yet deny them, declaring that they are false and enthusiastic ; or I, who having likewise subscribed that they are true, appear an advocate for them ?—May God open the eyes of many, that they may see how grossly they are imposed upon !

I rest satisfied that every candid person, who compares what has been said, with the following discourses, will be convinced that the doctrines I advance, are the doctrines of the established church ; and that they cannot be denied or branded with opprobrious distinctions, without casting a reproach on our ecclesiastical establishment.—Before the Popish bishops burnt John Hufs, for preaching salvation by Jesus Christ only, and not by any works or merits of our own, they put on his head a triple crown of paper, painted with devils. I doubt not but this had the desired effect ; namely, to expose the man whom they could not confute. Every advocate for the doctrines of the established church, for the last forty-years, has met with something of the like treatment. At his first appearance the cry has usually been, “ a Methodist ! a Methodist ! ”—This has generally succeeded. The people imagining  
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something very bad was meant by the word, have condemned the preacher and his doctrines, without giving them a fair hearing ; and so have been unwarily brought to condemn the doctrines of their own church.— This trick has been played off with success in almost every county in the kingdom. It is to be wished, that those who thus delude the people, who draw them off from hearing the pure doctrines of the Reformation, the true doctrines of their own church, would undertake to prove their assertions ; would publicly declare that our articles are false ; and at the same time inform the world how they have acted with regard to them.

Will you, Sir, undertake this office ? If so, let me beseech you to execute it faithfully. Use no reserve, but plainly declare that you subscribed to the articles, because you knew you could not otherwise enjoy the emoluments of the church :—that you gave it under your hand that they are agreeable to the Word of God ; are to be understood in the literal and grammatical sense ; and that your subscription was willingly, and from the heart—*yet you believe they are false*. Confess that you cannot baptise or catechise the children of your parish, without acknowledging that they are true ; *yet you believe they are false*.

*false.* Own you cannot publicly use the service of the church, without declaring that they are true, *yet you believe they are false.* I cheerfully wear the customary badge of reproach, for preaching according to the articles I have subscribed; but shall never think you act ingenuously, while you conceal so material a part of what ought to be known.

It is in vain to deny, that errors have long been in the church; that Arminians, Socinians, and Arians, have swarmed among us for more than an hundred years. They have all subscribed the articles; and yet it has long since been demonstrated, that the articles, when taken in the literal and grammatical sense, are incapable of an Arminian, Arian, or Socinian construction. But what good have they done? Have they been instrumental to bring any out of darkness into marvellous light, to deliver them from the captivity of Satan, and translate them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Alas! shew me the person, whose conversation is conformable to his Bible, and who was brought to that happy state by means of their principles, and I will publicly acknowledge my error. Surely such a total want of success might long since have taught them, that their doctrines are not agreeable to the Word  
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of God, since he will not suffer them to profit his people at all. Our ministry will never be successful, till we return to the doctrines of the Reformation; to the truth of which we have both subscribed. These contain the true principles of Christianity. These alone point out our disorder by nature, and where only a remedy is to be found; and wherever these are clearly and faithfully delivered, God more or less condescends to accompany them with his blessing. To those then let the people attend; they can be led to happiness by no other. Whenever these are omitted, they do not hear what they ought to hear. And whenever any other doctrines are delivered, as the doctrines of Christianity, as the doctrines of the church of England, the people are imposed upon, are deceived.

I am, &c.

## OF CHRISTIANITY.



### LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

**I** AM favoured with your letter, but much disappointed, as the subject of it is very different from what I thought I had reason to expect. Instead of undertaking to prove that the doctrines I usually preach are false and enthusiastic—that the articles are inconsistent with the Scriptures, and therefore ought to be altered—that persons who subscribe may understand them in what sense they please—you have passed over every thing of this kind, and introduced a fresh charge, which amounts to this, that I am righteous over much. Alas! Sir, my conscience bears me witness, that the charge is far from being just. When I compare my practice with my engagements, as a minister of the established church, and more especially as a minister of the New Testament, I am ready to sink in the dust, to see how little I have done, and do, in order to fulfil them.

Upon a review of the offices for the ordination of ministers, we may see, that before  
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a person is ordained a deacon, he declares, in the presence of the bishop, the assisting ministers, and the congregation assembled, that "he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him that office, to serve God for the promoting his glory." And that he thinks "he is truly called to the ministry of the church, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ." Before he is ordained a priest, he also publicly declares, that "he thinks in his heart, that he is truly called to the office of the priesthood, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Soon after this solemn and public declaration, the bishop exhorts him, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge he is called; that is to say, to be a messenger, a watchman, and steward of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep, that are dispersed abroad—that they may be saved through Christ for ever." He adds, "Have always, therefore, printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death,

death, and for whom he shed his blood. The church and congregation whom you must serve, is his spouse, and his body. And if it shall happen the same church, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance, by reason of your negligence, you know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourself the end of your ministry—and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty.

Forasmuch then as your office is both of so great excellency, and of so great difficulty, you see with how great care and study you ought to apply yourself; as also to beware that neither you offend, nor be occasion that others offend—therefore, you ought, and have need to pray earnestly for God's Holy Spirit.

We hope you have well weighed and pondered these things long before this time; and that you have clearly determined, by God's grace, to give yourself wholly to this office, so that as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourself wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way; and that you will continually pray to God  
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the Father by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost ; that by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, you may wax ripper and stronger in your ministry ; and that you may so endeavour yourself to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that you may be a wholesome and godly example, and pattern for the people to follow. And now that this present congregation of Christ here assembled may also understand your mind and will in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duty, you shall answer plainly to these things, which we in the name of God and of his church shall demand of you touching the same."

Many questions are then put to him : the substance of which, and of his answers, in the very words that are used, is—" That he will give faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as the church and realm hath received the same ; and that he will teach the people committed to his cure and charge with all diligence to keep and observe them —that he will be ready with all faithful diligence

## OF CHRISTIANITY. 11

ligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word; and to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within his cure, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given:—that he will be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh." After this his solemn promise the bishop prays in the following words: "Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to fulfil the same."

This is a most solemn engagement for any man to make. Be it remembered, Sir, that you and I have made it, in the presence of a holy and just God, and who most assuredly expects that we should endeavour to fulfil it. But solemn and comprehensive as it is, it contains no more than the Scriptures require from all who undertake to officiate in sacred things.

The Epistles to Timothy point out, by the advice and exhortations contained in them, the duty of every minister of the gospel. "These things write I unto thee, says  
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the apostle, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I. Tim. iii. 14, 15.

Let us, then, seriously attend to some of the important things which the apostle speaks to Timothy, and not to him only, but to every minister in every age of the church. "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." I. Tim. iv. 12—16. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who

who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." I. Tim. vi. 12—14. I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee." II. Tim. i. 6. "Be thou not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." II. Tim. i. 8, 9. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." II. Tim. i. 13. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." II. Tim. ii. 3, 4. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II. Tim. ii. 15. "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call.



call on the Lord out of a pure heart." II. Tim. ii. 22. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." II. Tim. iv. 1, 2. "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing." II. Tim. iv. 5—8.

When we seriously consider our great concern in these solemn exhortations of the apostle, we shall be fully convinced, that there can be no reason for one clergyman to say to another, "Thou art righteous over much!" For what do they imply short of this—that it is the duty of every one, without a single exception, who undertakes the work of the ministry, to give himself wholly to it, and to devote his time and every talent

lent to the service of God, and the good of souls? And that he may do so, the word of God declares, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Every minister of the establishment is accordingly provided for by law, and is also by law prohibited from engaging in any worldly employ : and surely this implies, that it is expected from him, both by God and man, that he should make the work of the ministry the grand, the only business of his life ; that he should give up himself to the diligent and faithful discharge of it. A person, without a sense of the importance of the ministerial office, without a zeal for God, or a love for souls, may indeed run to the altar, as it is expressed, for a morsel of bread ; may have no other ends in undertaking it, than to procure a decent maintenance, and be able to live in an easy, genteel manner. When this is the case, no wonder if he endeavours to keep out of sight the solemn engagements he made ; for if he seriously considered them he could not be easy. Having obtained all that he aimed at, we are not to be surprised if he neglects his duty, sits down to enjoy himself, and cries out against those who act more conscientiously than he does. But still the vows of God are upon him, and it is

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justly expected that he should perform them. Instead, therefore, of charging others with being righteous over much, he would do well to consider that he himself is righteous over little.

I would acknowledge with shame and humiliation, that this was my own case. I entered the ministry from mere selfish motives, without one serious thought of God, of the nature of the office I was to execute, of the importance of my own soul, or of the souls of others. Nor did I once consider what obligations I was under, nor whether I aimed to discharge them, for more than ten years after I was ordained. I had not, to my remembrance, one thought, in all this time, of my horrid prevarications both with God and man, nor of the awful consequences which must have ensued, if I had died in that state. On Sundays, indeed, I put on the form of godliness, went to church, read the appointed prayers, and something which I called a sermon; though it was inconsistent with the prayers I had used a little before, and contradictory to those articles I had solemnly subscribed to be agreeable to the Scriptures. Nevertheless, I know there is a God of mercy; and that even such crying  
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ing sins as these may be pardoned through the blood of Jesus.

My case is indeed awful: the remembrance of it has often cut me to the heart, and often caused me to look upon myself as a monster of iniquity. But do you think, Sir, that it is singular! I fear it is not; yet I judge no man. It should, however, be considered, that God will judge the world, and that we must appear at his bar to answer for all that we shall have done in this life.

Religious establishments, when set up with the best views, will soon be abused to selfish purposes, if a strict discipline is not observed; if great care is not taken who are admitted into, and how they act while they continue in them. But if they are planned, or used to secular ends, they cannot long answer the grand designs of Christianity. If any discipline is observed, it will be far short of what it ought to be. Errors, both in doctrine and practice, will soon enter, prevail, abound. Offences will come, and perhaps at the times of ordination, the greatest care will be to keep out of the ministry those who are best qualified to do the work of it.

Suppose our ecclesiastical constitution was to be made a mere engine of state—that the greatest emoluments and dignities in it were

given, from time to time, not to the most wise, the most laborious in the work of the ministry, the most mighty in the Scriptures, the most devoted to God ; but to those whose connections had the greatest parliamentary interest : or, if now and then a learned man was promoted, it should be for such a kind of learning as oftener hinders, if possible, than promotes the glory of God. On such a sacrilegious use of power could a blessing from on high be expected ? Might it not be feared that, on account of such a wilful and horrid abuse of the design of our pious forefathers, it should be withheld ? and that, as nothing more was aimed at than the promoting of private ends, nothing more should be obtained ? Under such circumstances, our ecclesiastical superiors being, in general, destitute of the power of godliness, would content themselves with the form of it, and consult more their own ease and honour in their elevated stations, than the conscientious discharge of their duty, and the interests of religion. Discipline would be relaxed. Visitations would be unfrequent and always formal. Little or no regard would be paid to orthodoxy, uniformity, or the necessary qualifications of candidates for the ministry. The contagion would soon spread. A traffic would  
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be made of sacred things. The next presentations to and advowsons of livings would be carried to market, and purchased by laymen in order to make a decent provision for some of their children. What could be expected from such persons when admitted into the church? As their appointments were bought for them, they would hardly concern themselves about much more than making the most of their livings. More thought would probably be taken about the fleece, than the flock. Many of the people would soon be discontented, murmur, and keep from the public worship; and so the good design of a religious establishment be, in a great measure, frustrated. It would, no doubt, be so in many places. Dissenters would take advantage, and draw several of the more serious people to their meetings; or the more serious people, finding that their ministers did not preach according to their articles, and had a very imperfect sense of sacred things, would go over to the Dissenters. Perhaps the Lord would shew his displeasure, and at the same time his mercy: would give unto several of the laity to understand and feel the importance of the best things; and having given them this knowledge, permit them to go out into the highways and hedges, and

compel their fellow sinners to hearken to that gospel, which their own ministers would not preach to them. Perhaps, in his sovereign pleasure, he would open the eyes of some of the hitherto thoughtless clergy, and give them to be able, faithful, and successful ministers of the New Testament. What would be the consequence? Would not the rest be slighted, and the better sort of their people attached to others? And would not they, in return, cry out against the serious people and the ministers who acted more conscientiously than themselves? Would they not load them with reproach, and find out some ridiculous name by which they might distinguish them from others. These things might reasonably be expected; for agreeable to such a conduct is the spirit of the world. It then might not be thought sufficient to say, "Ye are righteous over much;" but be judged necessary to add gross misrepresentation, slander, persecution; any thing that would weaken their influence with thinking persons, and hinder their usefulness. But would this conduct prove their knowledge of the truth? No; rather their ignorance of it. Would it proceed from a love to the interests of true religion? No; but rather from an enmity against it. From  
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an evidence that these persons were wrong? No; but from a consciousness that they themselves did not endeavour to fulfil their engagements, and therefore, that they who did, were as pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides.

God will have his work done; and if they who undertake it, will not do it, he will certainly employ others; for his counsel shall stand, and all that he has determined shall assuredly come to pass. For the last fifty years, at least, there has been such a departure from the doctrines and spirit of Christianity, among those who undertook and were regularly sent to be builders, that, like the Jewish priests of old, they have "refused that stone which is become the head of the corner." What has taken place in the mean time? God has raised up others. "He has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty." I. Cor. i. 27. Many have gone forth and declared publicly the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; and though they were not regularly ordained to the work of the ministry, God has blessed his truth delivered by them, so that they have been the instruments of bring-



ing many to the knowledge and practice of the gospel. Thus it was of old. When the chief priests and rulers of the Jews had departed from, and almost forgotten the law of Moses—when they laid more stress on the traditions of men, than on the commandments of God—when, having lost the spirit of religion, they were looking for a mere temporal Messiah; then God raised up the apostles. They had little or nothing of human learning, but God taught and endued them with power from on high; and then “they went forth, preaching every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” Mark xvi. 20. Thus it has been in every age of the church; and thus, Sir, I scruple not to affirm, it has been in our day.

If, then, we meet with no success in our ministry, should we not fear that the Lord is displeased—that his awful denunciation against the false prophets of old is against us, “they shall not profit my people at all?” Should it not cause us to inquire, what were our motives for entering into the ministry? What did we then undertake? Are we labouring to fulfil our engagements? “Them that honour me, says God, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.”

esteemed." I. Sam. ii. 30. We cannot surely honour him more than by aiming habitually to act and live for him ; nor can we despise him more, than by solemnly promising and undertaking to do so, and paying no regard to our engagements. If our hearts are not with God in our work, preferring his service, and desiring his glory more than any temporal advantage, it is to be feared that we are false to our engagements, that we ran before we were sent, and are even strangers to the grand ends of a gospel ministry.

If we are persuaded that we are sent of God, the solemn message of the apostle, " say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it," Col. iv. 17. will have more weight to quicken us to diligence in our work, than the words " be not righteous over much," tortured from their original meaning, and used with a contemptuous sneer, will have to make us idle and slothful in business. If we know any thing of the worth of souls, if we really believe that Christ died for sinners, and are able to apply this important truth to ourselves : or, if, to use the words of St. Peter, " God . . . hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

I. Pet. i. 3. the love of Christ will constrain us to aim to fulfil our most solemn engagements ; we shall delight in our privilege to feed his lambs, to feed his sheep ; we shall cheerfully devote ourselves to his service, persuaded that all we can do is infinitely short of what we owe to him, who died for us.

I am persuaded that a glimpse of the value of souls, and of the mercies of God through a Mediator, has caused many to act as ministers, to speak publicly as persons having authority, though it was never given them. But if a man has similar views, and is, moreover, persuaded that he is regularly called to the work of the ministry, surely he will not take for the standard of his duty, the conduct of those who do not understand these things, or perhaps treat them with contempt. To the law and to the testimony ; to his solemn engagements and the word of God, he must go to know what is right in this matter. What these teach, he is bound to practise, or he cannot have a conscience void of offence.

What others do can be no rule to him, any farther than it agrees with the Scriptures. If persons who have entered the ministry are ignorant of the importance of the charge they have undertaken, or will not be informed what it is, or are determined not to act according

cording to it, let them not rashly condemn others, who aim to act conscientiously; but rather let them remember that they have a Lord and Master, to whom they shall certainly give an account of their stewardship. If the private Christian is commanded to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," I. Cor. xv. 5, 8. surely, less than this will not be expected from the public minister. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxiv. 44—51.

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## L E T T E R    III.

REV. SIR,

**Y**OU have again changed the subject : instead of undertaking to prove that the doctrines I usually preach are false and enthusiastic ; instead of advancing any thing in support of your other charge, that I am righteous over much ; you now talk about income — about a clergyman's income — about an income which is necessary to support a man's dignity as a clergyman — about an income sufficient to place him between the 'squire and the farmer : if inferior to that of the 'squire, at least superior to that of the farmer. This you think necessary for every clergyman to have, in order to support his dignity ; and therefore, if the care of one church will not supply this, it is justifiable in him to undertake the care of two, three, or even four churches, in order to get it, if he cannot procure it without serving so many. All this is quite new to me : I never read nor heard of it before. After this frank acknowledgement I trust you will  
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indulge me with your candour, if, by what I write, I should too plainly discover, that our ideas on this subject are absolutely irreconcilable.

I think, that they who are called of God to the work of the ministry, should trust to him for a maintenance; not doubting but that, while they are engaged in his service, he will take care to provide for them;—that in his providence he will lead them to the place or charge where they shall exercise their ministry; and that, seeing his will in their appointment, they should not remove from that charge to which he evidently led them; nor accept of any other, unless they have good reason to believe it is his will that they should accept it. These notions I have entertained for many years; have all along thought them just and indisputable, and accordingly have constantly made them a rule for my own conduct; but, if what you advance is true, I have hitherto judged very erroneously, and probably to the very great detriment of my worldly interests: for, if I had known it was right and necessary, in order to get between the 'squire and farmer, to add church to church, and living to living, and had taken the steps that are usually taken for such purposes, I believe I should.

should, long before now, have made as good a figure in outward things, as most of my neighbours.

The apostles were all, without one exception that I know of, poor men. Matthew was called, sitting at the receipt of custom. Jesus passed by and said, "Follow me." His business was probably like that of a custom-house officer or exciseman: he, like one of them, did a great deal of work for a little money, and perhaps, like one of them, had nothing but his place to support him. Yet, upon the call of Jesus, he immediately arose and immediately followed him. Nor did he mention, that I ever heard or read, a word about a maintenance, or an income necessary to support his dignity. Peter and Andrew his brother, James and John his brother, were occupied as fishermen; and the rest of the apostles were also engaged in mean employments, all endeavouring to get bread for the day, when Jesus called them. Notwithstanding, they immediately arose, and without hesitation forsook all that they had, and followed him. Nor did any one of them, any more than Matthew, speak a word about an income, nor ask how they should be supported, nor make any inquiry how they should be able to get between the  
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'squire and the farmer. The power of God accompanied the call of Jesus. They felt their duty, their interest, their privilege, and were enabled to leave all their concerns with him.

You will say, Is this an example for us? I really think it is. If we are persuaded that God has called us to the work of the ministry, and given us to obey his call, we can scarcely doubt but that he will provide for us. It is absurd to suppose that we are called to declare the truth of God to others, before we are acquainted with it ourselves, and are even conversant with the Scriptures. In them, we may see that God has always provided for his servants; and sooner than they should want, has often supplied them in a miraculous manner. In them, we may see that he has promised to withhold no manner of thing that is good; and to be with them always, even unto the end of the world: to be with them, helping them in the work of the ministry; and to be with them, no doubt, so as to provide all things necessary for their bodies. Every humane master thinks himself bound to provide for his servant, and therefore provides for him; and will God do less? What, he who has said that the labourer is worthy of his hire?

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Certainly not. He will always give enough, and in general, to spare; enough to answer every reasonable purpose for ourselves, and something to spare, that we may occasionally administer to the necessities of others. He may not give enough to gratify a fondness for worldly customs and fashions, to enable us to keep pace with others, who are evidently lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; but he will certainly give enough to supply our real wants, so that we may go on cheerfully in his service. Though the apostles had no certain income, and were opposed and persecuted by those in power, were they ever in want? Did they ever complain that they had not what was necessary? No. On the other hand, they acknowledged that they had enough. "When I sent you, said our Lord, without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing." Luke xxii. 35. In like manner it has happened in every age of the church. They who have most faithfully attended to the work of the ministry, have generally been kept, by a rancorous opposition, from obtaining a share of the larger emoluments and honours of the church, yet they have never been in want; and the hand of the Lord has been often seen in providing for them.

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“ Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges ?” I. Cor. ix. 7. He who is sent of God to preach the gospel, is engaged in the service of God, and not in his own proper business. He assuredly, then, will not suffer him to labour for nought. He will give him his wages, and provide for him in temporals. To God, then, he may justly and confidently look for a maintenance. He need not rob his master of any of the time that should be spent in his service ; he need not take any steps, or use any compliances, derogatory to the glory of God, and the credit of his office, in order to get a genteel livelihood ; nor entertain the least care about being provided with all that is necessary, and the most proper for him, while he is faithfully engaged in his service.

God acts in a sovereign manner, dividing to every one severally as he pleases. Yet he does all things well. He knows what measure of the good things of this world is the best for any of his servants, and he will assuredly give him that. A minister, then, should not only look to God for a maintenance, but believe that what he receives is the most proper for him ; that he can fulfil the duties of his station better with that, than he could with any other. With these views,  
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let his income be great or small, he will see it as coming from God, as the provision which his Lord and Master has made for him, and which is certainly sufficient. He will be content with, and thankful for it, and neither ask nor wish for more.

When a Minister thus judges and acts, he honours God, by owning his dependence on him, and submitting to his sovereign will: he avoids all the anxiety which wishes and endeavours for a large income always bring with them: he is also more at liberty to be diligent, and more likely to have his heart in his work. But if he owns not God as a sovereign Ruler, and does not submit to him in his providential dispensations: if, instead of thankfully receiving the provision he grants, and being content with it, he imagines a greater is necessary, in order to support some fancied dignity, how can he be easy, have his heart in his employ, and fulfil his engagements? Such an imagination will surely cause discontent, luke-warmness, negligence. He will be ready to murmur at God, repine at the outward prosperity of others, and think he serves an hard master.

Having thus mentioned a little of what occurred to me upon considering your letter,  
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I will now readily attend to what you more particularly advance in it.

The most remarkable of your assertions, and to which I very strongly object is, that it is necessary for every clergyman to have an income sufficient to place him between the squire and the farmer, in order to support his dignity; and that, to procure this, he is justifiable in taking upon himself the care of two, three, or even four churches. Upon this I would observe, in the first place, that a clergyman cannot properly serve several churches; and that he cannot even undertake to serve them, without violating his engagements, and in a great measure frustrating the grand end for which he was ordained.

When a person is ordained, his appointment is, in general, to a single curacy. I believe he cannot legally be appointed to more than one. And as the salary allowed a curate is never large, he may think it necessary to have the care of several, even of four churches, in order to have an income sufficient to support his dignity. Supposing, then, that he undertakes the care of four, how is he to serve them? You may answer, he can serve two in the morning, and two in the afternoon. But, at what hours? The convenience of the people should certainly  
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be consulted, as the service is designed principally for their benefit. But is it possible to perform the whole of the appointed service, and in a proper solemn manner, at two different churches in the morning, and at two different churches in the afternoon; and also, at times convenient for the several congregations that should attend them? Supposing the churches are not more than two miles distant from each other; and in the country they are seldom so near; how can he properly attend them all? You know that, in country parishes, there are works of necessity, to be done, in the morning, at noon, and again in the evening; and which cannot be dispensed with. But upon this plan, instead of being able to serve them all at convenient times, you may see, with a moment's consideration, that he would not be able to serve one at a proper time; for the times at which he would serve them must evidently be, all of them, either too early, or too late, to be convenient for the people; and more especially in the winter season.

Supposing he undertakes the care of only three; yet two of them must be served at improper times; for he must serve two either in the morning or the afternoon; and the two which he serves in either part of the day, will be served the one too soon, and the other too

too late to be convenient for the people ; and therefore, only one church out of three will be served at a convenient time ; and surely this is not to serve three churches as they ought to be served.

Supposing he takes the care of only two ; he will then, most likely, serve one of them in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon. But it is well known, that servants in general, and many others, cannot conveniently attend in the forenoon. These then can have the benefit of public service only once in a fortnight. And certainly this is too seldom for persons to have the opportunity of worshipping God in public, or to have the benefit of public instruction. Reverence to God—respect to the institution of the sabbath—a sense of the backwardness of the heart to the best things, and that multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge—and even a regard to his own character, should prevail with a minister to have service in his parish church more than once on a Lord's day.

We have hitherto reasoned upon a supposition, that the legal service is only prayers and sermon, once a day, in each church ; but this is by no means the case. The service appointed by law is, prayers and sermon

mon in the morning, and prayers and catechising, or instruction in the afternoon, and that in every parish. But how is this to be done, even if he undertakes the care of only two churches? According to what we have already observed, it cannot be. How then is it possible for him to perform the legal duty, if he undertakes the charge of three or four different parishes?

I am aware that this is connived at, or dispensed with, and that it is become a custom to omit prayers and catechising, or other instruction, the second part of the day, in most parishes in the kingdom; but I know not who has any authority to dispense with this; and I believe that the inhabitants of every parish can insist on its being performed. I am sure it is necessary.

But another difficulty still remains. By what authority can he undertake the care of several churches, even if he could properly serve them? You may say, if he can agree with the incumbents of the several parishes it will do. Such an agreement is made to do in many places, I believe, but it is not according to law. No man can legally officiate as a curate in any parish, without a licence from the bishop of his diocese: and if he is licensed to serve one church, he cannot legally

gally officiate in another, without another licence. But this I never knew granted ; and I question whether any diocesan has a power to grant it. But if it is ever done, I know not by what law, and am persuaded that it is inconsistent with the spirit of our ecclesiastical constitution.

The same reasoning applies in the case of a dispensation to hold two churches. Not to inquire now whether such a dispensation is warranted by the Word of God, and the practice of the primitive times ; I would just observe, that a dispensation to hold two churches does not give a dispensation to omit the whole, or any part of the duty, that was legally required to be performed in each of the churches, before the dispensation was granted. But since a person cannot serve two churches in the manner required by law ; and as a dispensation to hold two churches does not give a right to omit any part of the service required by law, a person cannot serve two churches properly, though he may have a dispensation to hold them.

From these considerations, then, it is evident, that a clergyman cannot properly serve several churches ; and that he cannot even undertake to serve them without violating his solemn promises, and in a great measure frus-



frustrating the grand end for which he was ordained.

Consider now who acts with the most propriety, and with the greatest probability of answering the grand end of the ministry—he who, content with his income, let it be great or small, has service in his church twice on the Lord's day, at times very convenient for his parishioners, and even opens his house in the evening to as many as chuse to attend him; or he, who aiming at a large income, to support an imaginary dignity, undertakes more than he can well perform, and which he cannot even undertake without violating his most solemn engagements? But, what dignity in a Christian minister is a large income necessary to support? I must confess I know not. I am sure many have supported a proper dignity without one. I believe the twelve apostles had not an hundred pounds a-year to maintain them all; and yet they well supported their dignity. In like manner it has been in every age of the church. Many have supported all the dignity that was necessary, though they had not a large income. It is so in the present day. And I doubt not but it would be found, upon inquiry, that few, with a large income, have supported the dignity of a Christian minister

minister so well as very many have done, who have had only a small one. But you will say, all this wants proof. I apprehend the truth of it will soon appear, if it is not already evident, and perhaps too plainly.

In order to determine this point, we may now inquire in what the proper dignity of a Christian minister consists. It consists, no doubt, in the faithful, conscientious discharge of his duty. He who has the clearest views of the importance of his office, and acts most agreeably to those views, he best supports his dignity. It is, indeed, a great honour conferred on a man, to be appointed of God to any employ: but he can support the dignity of his appointment in no other manner, than in the faithful, conscientious performance of what God commands. Great honour was certainly put upon Jonah, when he was sent to preach repentance to the inhabitants of Nineveh. But when, through the fear of men, and cavilling at the dispensations of the Most High, he fled to Tarshish, instead of going to Nineveh, he did not support the dignity of a prophet, but proved himself a rebel. But when, sensible of his sin and folly, he humbled himself before God; and, notwithstanding the dangers which attended a faithful discharge of his duty, he went and

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boldly declared, " Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,"—then he acted with, and supported his dignity. The high-priest, who, in the time of St. Paul, neither believed nor walked according to the spirit of the religion he professed, could not, with all the outward ornaments of his office, support his dignity. Even on the grand day of atonement, when he had a peculiar privilege above all the sons of men, to represent the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, every discerning inward Jew could see that something was wanting, to keep up his dignity and character, viz. an understanding of what he was about, a heart for his work, and a corresponding life and conversation. On the other hand, though the apostle had none of these admired, and, perhaps envied externals; he kept up the dignity of his office, by faithfully discharging the duties of it. He had not costly robes to adorn his body—he had not a numerous retinue of servants to wait on him—he had not a large income to answer his great expences; but he had a supreme love to Christ and souls; and therefore, " He counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received.

ceived of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God." Acts xx. 24.

You may say, is not a large income necessary to keep him from contempt, and give weight to his ministry? Not that I know of. Let his income be ever so large, he will be lightly esteemed by thinking men, if he does not attend to the duties of his station, and live accordingly. And, let his income be ever so small, he will have their regard, if they observe in him a consistency of conduct, suitable to the nature of his office. They who look only to outward things, may sometimes treat him with disrespect, because he has but little; and judging of persons according to their income, may at times treat others with respect, because they have much; but surely the opinion of such will neither add to, nor take from the real importance of any man. As to giving weight to his ministry—if, by the expression, you mean success; this depends not in the least upon income. I am persuaded, that fewer persons become real Christians, by the preaching of the most exalted of the clergy, than by the ministry of persons who have not the twentieth part of their income. Success depends neither upon income, knowledge, zeal, diligence, nor upon all these when united; but

solely upon the sovereign power of God. Even a Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but God only can give an increase.

Look into the world, and see whether those who have got between the 'squire and the farmer, or above them both, have clearer views of the importance of their duty, or are more diligent and successful in the performance of it, than others. Is it not observed, even by the lowest of the people, that they who have the largest incomes, are in general the least diligent, the least successful? The words of the apostle, "We preach not ourselves," are applicable, in a sense, to most of those who have great preferment. The work of the ministry is generally committed to the care of others, who drudge through it for about the sixth, eighth, or tenth part of the profits of the livings, and all the rest is employed in keeping up the dignity—not of the Christian minister, but of the little gentleman. If a minister's heart is not in his work, what else can be expected? but when it is, a different conduct will assuredly take place. These things, which are notorious, are demonstrations that a large income is not necessary for a man, in order to support his dignity, and give weight to his ministry. If  
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his heart is in his work, he will be sufficiently diligent and zealous to preserve a consistency of character, and in consequence, to command respect from thinking persons ; and if it is not, affluence will not stir him up to a faithful discharge of his engagements, but rather draw his attention and affection to other things.

When we see a man laying a great stress upon obtaining a large income, in order, as he says, to support an imaginary dignity, does he not give reason to fear that his heart is set more on the things of this world, than it ought to be ; and to suspect that a desire to obtain this was his chief motive for entering into the ministry ? And if the people, whom he statedly serves, have suspicions of this kind, how can he gain their esteem, or expect their attention to his ministrations ? If he speaks sincerely, is there not reason also to fear that his heart deceives him, and that, though he knows it not, he is seeking a large income, for the sake of the conveniences it will procure, and not in order to support his dignity as a minister ? I cannot think that the man was moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon himself the work of the ministry, who is not willing to trust all his temporal concerns with God, I am sure

that they who have been the most zealous and successful in the work of the ministry, have evidenced no anxious regard about them. To have such an income as is sufficient to command all the necessaries of life, so that a minister may give himself wholly to the duties of his station is, no doubt, agreeable; and such a one the law provides for all who officiate in sacred things. But, for a man to be earnest after affluence, in order to support some fancied dignity, discovers a distrust of God, a love of ease, and an ignorance of the importance of his office.

We here see through a glass darkly, are prone to error, and often find reason to change our sentiments. This should teach us to receive nothing as truth, without examination. Infallible authority declares "that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked." When we find our inclinations are inconsistent with our professions, we may be assured something is amiss. We ought immediately to search, that we may discover what it is. A wilful neglect in such a case is dangerous. In a little while it may be too late to search. Our disease, though discovered, may admit of no remedy.

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When a minister finds death at hand, and eternity opening to his view, what must he feel, if conscience shall declare, that his chief motive for taking upon himself the sacred office was, to be able to live genteelly ; that he has laboured more for ease and affluence, than the glory of God and the good of souls ! He will then see the folly and madness of his choice. The envied outward distinctions between man and man will then be stripped of their false glory, and seen in their true light. Trifles light as air. Nothing, under God, can then support a man, but the consciousness that he has chiefly laboured to save his own soul, and the souls of those committed to his care. When he is called to give an account of his stewardship, it will not be asked whether his income was great or small ? but whether he aimed to discharge his engagements ; not whether he laboured after a large income ? but whether he laboured chiefly for God and souls ? If this shall not appear, how will he be able to lift up his head ? Conscience will condemn—remorse will torment him.—His mouth will be stopped ; and in a moment he will hear the irreverfible sen-



56 THE PRINCIPLES, &c.

gence, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." Matt. xxv. 30.

We, Sir, are deeply interested in these things. May we lay them to heart.

I am, &c..

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## DISCOURSE I.

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

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JOB xiv. 4.

*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?  
Not one.*

AS all practice depends upon knowledge, it is impossible for a man to act aright, till he has a just idea of his duty. In the common affairs of life, we never expect a person should be able to do a thing, till he has been taught how to do it. And to render our instructions effectual, we first endeavour to ground him in the rudiments of what he is to learn. This method is certainly not less necessary to be observed in matters of religion. The principles of our duty must be first clearly proved, and fully established, or we may be dangerously mistaken

in what is of the utmost consequence. As God created man, the duty of man to God originally proceeds from the relation he bears to him—the relation of a creature to his Creator. The knowledge, therefore, of his duty must be founded in the knowledge of himself. He must be informed what he is by nature, before he can properly conduct himself to his Maker. If man is, by nature, innocent, dutiful, grateful to his Maker, and delighting in Him above all things, the duty required of him will certainly be different from what it must be, if he is, by nature, sinful, disobedient, ungrateful to his Maker, and loving other things in preference to Him. Thus a parent looks for a different behaviour from an obedient son, to what he does from a disobedient one. From the obedient son he desires only a continuance of gratitude and love, as a proper return for his fatherly care and affection; but from the disobedient one, he expects first a desire to be reconciled to him, and a readiness to seek a pardon for his offences. Now, man must be, by nature, either sinful or innocent; there is no intermediate, or third state. It must, therefore, be an inquiry of the utmost importance, to know in which of them he is born: for unless he is fully persuaded of  
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this, whatever scheme of religion he may embrace, as the truth of God, he cannot be assured that it is the will of his Maker; nor will it yield him any solid peace and satisfaction of mind. The only way for him to arrive at this knowledge is, to study the Scriptures and himself; to search what God has been pleased to declare of this matter, and compare it with what passes in his heart and life. Revelation implies the inability of man, to discover what is necessary for him to know concerning God and himself. It is designed to be a "Lamp to his feet, and a light to his path." The Scriptures "are written for our learning,"—to make men "wise unto salvation;" and they are said to err who know them not. But the mere reading of them, even with attention, will not answer the end. It is necessary he should apply for the assistance of God, who has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them who ask. Without this he can expect no real benefit, and will, very probably, receive nothing as the truth of God, but what is agreeable to the notions he before entertained of it, without examination. But acting thus, his inquiry cannot be fruitless; it will assuredly turn to some good account; for it is promised, that they who seek shall find. If he searches di-

ligeritly, with prayer and perseverance, the knowledge he will gain, will richly repay all his labour. And the importance of it is so great, that, in comparison of this, all the wisdom of the world is mere foolishness. The Scriptures assure us, that God made man upright; that he formed him in his own image: "In the image of God created he him." Gen. i. 27. By the image of God is not meant any bodily shape; for as God is a being purely spiritual, it is plain he has no such thing. But we are to understand by it, the representation of his mind, which consists in perfect knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. St. Paul tells the Colossians, "That they have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Coloss. iii. 10. and informs the Ephesians, that they have been taught to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephes. iv. 24. Adam, therefore, was created in knowledge, holiness, and righteousness. His understanding was clear and comprehensive, fully acquainted with whatever it was necessary for him to know. His will was fixed on that which was good, and his affections were upright, pure, and holy. His heart was warm with the love of  
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God, and continually ready for praise and thanksgiving. His situation was abundantly desirable. God had placed him there, where every thing existed that was pleasant to the sight, or good for food. He had power, and it was unlimited. He was made lord of the universe; every thing was put in subjection under his feet. The whole animal creation was taught to submit, to stand in awe of, and acknowledge him for their sovereign. His inward tranquillity was also very great: he had no uneasy reflections to ruffle and discompose him; no anxious desires for the things of this life. On the contrary, peace and content dwelt in his heart, accompanied with an assurance of the favour and love of his Maker. And before he had long enjoyed this proof of the loving-kindness of the Most High, in order to increase his happiness, he had the precious gift of a companion, one of the same mind with himself, dear to him by the nearest and strongest of ties; being flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and so formed every way, by God, as to be an help meet for him. Moreover, as if all this was not enough, he was permitted to hold communion with his Maker; to converse with God, as friend with friend. Yet his happiness was dependent, connected with

with obedience, and only one thing was forbidden him by express command.\* “Of every tree of the garden (said the Almighty) thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Gen. ii. 16, 17.

In this happy state was Adam formed. He had every thing that he could reasonably desire; was lord of the universe, happy in himself, and happy in all about him; had the free liberty of using every thing he saw, one only excepted. And farther, the continuance of all these blessings depended upon his obedience, from which he had not the least motive to depart; and his disobedience would be attended with an eternal separation.

\* I expressed myself formerly, as if Adam’s happiness was connected with his obedience to one single command, viz. to his not eating of the forbidden fruit. This I now think inaccurate. As it was his duty to love the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul, independent of his covenant engagement in behalf of himself and his posterity, if at any time his heart had deviated from God, as his all in all, he would have forfeited his own personal happiness; and therefore, I apprehend, that as soon as he began to desire to eat of the forbidden fruit, *that he might be as God*, knowing good and evil, he forfeited the favour of God, and incurred the penalty of disobedience, though he did not involve his posterity in any guilt, till he actually eat of it.

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from God. Moreover, as an additionally constraining motive to obedience, the happiness or misery of all his posterity depended upon it; for he was a surety for all mankind; insomuch, that if Adam had been obedient, the blessings he then enjoyed would have been continued to them, never to be lessened in value, never to be taken away; and if he disobeyed his Maker's command, his disobedience was to be placed to their account, as well as to his own; and they were to be as obnoxious to punishment, as if they had personally broken the covenant. The penalty of which disobedience was not only a forfeiture of all these blessings, but an exchange of an happy eternal life, for a miserable eternal death.

The history of Adam, as given by Moses, furnishes us with no proof of, nor even with the least hint concerning such a covenant between God and our first parent; but we may very easily gather from the writings of St. Paul, that there must have been such.—“By one man (saith the apostle) sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that (or in whom) all have sinned.” Rom. v. 12. “Through the offence of one many be dead,” ver. 15. “By the offence of one, judgment came upon all  
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all men to condemnation," ver. 18. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," ver. 19. All these pertinent passages are to be found in one single chapter; and when the occasion of them is considered, cannot be fairly applied to any other subject; but must be admitted as proofs, that Adam's sin was placed to the account of his posterity; or, that he was a covenant head for all that should proceed from him. Adam, it must be supposed, knew all this, yet, notwithstanding all these weighty motives to obedience, of gratitude to God, of preserving happiness for himself and his posterity, and avoiding the torments of a miserable eternity, he did wilfully eat of the forbidden fruit, he sinned, he fell. The fatal effects of his sin were immediately felt in himself, have from that day to this been visible among his wretched posterity, and will continue to be seen till time shall be no more.

Some have saucily expostulated, "How could Adam be criminal in gratifying that appetite, which his Maker gave him? If it was not to be indulged, why was it given? But, supposing he was to blame, how can we be concerned in this matter? how can his posterity be justly chargeable with any thing he did? We never gave our consent. We had

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no existence when it is imagined that these things passed." To such it might be sufficient to say, God is not a man, that he should be obliged to point out the reason and propriety of his conduct, in his dealings with others. He is a sovereign God, but will ever do that which is right. This should stop the mouth of every one, who acknowledges and professes to reverence a Supreme Being. The point, however, is, whether God has revealed this matter; that is, declared that it is so. In order, then, to know this, humbly search his Word, and look to him for instruction, and your cavils may be removed. To cavil at what he has revealed, is to suppose yourself wiser than the Almighty. It would be better to submit your belief to what he has condescended to declare, than wantonly and impiously to dispute the truth of it. This you must do, if ever you would flee from the wrath to come; and this you will do, if, by his grace, you are enabled to see your danger, and anxious to avoid being made a monument of his justice. But to serious persons, who desire to know more of this matter, I would observe, that this sin of Adam was the greatest that could possibly have been committed by man; the most heinous in itself, and the most

most dreadful in its consequences. It was an instance of base ingratitude. Adam knew he felt that he was happy, beyond all that tongue could express, or thought conceive. He was, moreover, sensible, that all the blessings he enjoyed, were from God's sovereign bounty, unmerited, unasked. Duty then, gratitude, and every laudable motive, loudly called on him to adhere to the will of his Maker, and to reject, with indignation, whatever might solicit him to turn aside from it. To eat then of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, when he had the liberty of eating of every other tree in the garden; and of which tree God had said, "Thou shalt not eat of it," was lightly to esteem the command of his Maker, and presumptuously to be guilty of base ingratitude.

It was, moreover, to disregard the threatenings of God. Adam could not assuredly know what it was to die; death being what, perhaps, he had never seen. Or, if he had seen it, it could have been only in the case of mere animals; and even this could have given him but a faint, if any, idea of the agonizing pains attending the separation of the body and soul in a rational being. Besides, such a view could convey to him nothing of what was meant by a loss of the  
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Divine image in the soul, and an everlasting separation from God and happiness, which were without doubt, comprehended in the sentence, "Thou shalt surely die." But he most certainly knew, that the same Being who made him happy, could deprive him of the happiness he enjoyed. He knew, from the contemplation of his own existence, the endowments of his body and mind, the animal creation, the various wonders in heaven and earth, that there was no limiting or resisting the power of their common Creator. And as death was to be the punishment of disobedience, he could not but imagine, that it would be something very dreadful. To eat, therefore of the forbidden tree, was presumptuously to disregard the threatenings of the Almighty. It was to believe the tempter rather than God. His Creator had said, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here was a plain declaration, accompanied with a peremptory threatening. After Adam had sufficient time to consider the meaning of these words, who uttered them, the end for which they were spoken, the dreadful things they implied, and that multitudes besides himself might be involved in the evils

evils they held forth ; the tempter, in the serpent, a stranger, made his appearance, contradicted all this, and gave his God the lie. "Ye shall not surely die ; for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened ; and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. iii. 4, 5. Such a declaration from the mouth of one of the brute creation, instead of gaining his assent, should have filled him with horror and indignation. But he believed the brute, and not his God. So that to eat of the forbidden tree, was to give credit to the tempter, of whom, till that fatal hour, he knew nothing, and to disbelieve his Maker, whose goodness he had largely tasted, and whose fidelity he had experienced ; and whom, therefore, in gratitude and reason, he was bound to believe. It was to renounce his allegiance to his Maker, and aim to act independent of him. The tempter inflamed his desires with this daring lie, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, your eyes shall be open, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. Your understanding is now very limited, confined within very narrow bounds, in comparison of what it is capable of comprehending. You know only what is good ; you are capable of understanding

standing also what is evil. Your happiness consists in the knowledge of what is good. The happiness of God consists in knowing both good and evil. But if you eat of the fruit of this tree, your eyes will be opened, your understanding will be enlarged, your happiness greatly increased. "You will be as God, knowing good and evil;" as wise and as happy as He is. Yea, "God doth know this," and therefore forbids you the use of this tree, lest you should equal him in wisdom and happiness." Such an increase of both seemed desirable. His ungrateful and ambitious heart was puffed up with the expectation of arriving at a superior station to what he then enjoyed. And, in order to accomplish this, he refused to be guided by the will of God, broke through all the obligations of duty and gratitude, disregarded all consequences to himself and his posterity, and did eat of the fatal tree. Thus he renounced his allegiance to his Maker, and aimed to act independent of him. It was to deprive God of the honour and worship due to him from the whole race of his posterity. The duty man owes to God is, a perfect submission to his will, without presuming to inquire, Why am I to act thus? It is sufficient, as a ground for action, to know God  
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has commanded it. And, therefore, so far as we are submissive to his will, upon this principle, "God has commanded—thus saith the Lord." So far are we obedient to him, and no farther. When we know any thing to be the will of God, and refuse to comply with it immediately, hesitating till we understand, or have attempted to find out the reason of it; in that instance we are guilty of rebellion against him. The reason is plain. God made all things for his glory—he requires truth in the inward parts. It is man's duty to love him with all his heart, and with all his soul—he is taught to say, in his addresses to the Most High, "Thy will be done." It therefore follows, that all that is within him should bless and praise his holy name, and without reluctance or hesitation obey him. This backwardness of the heart to close immediately with the will of God is, however, seldom considered as sinful. Man, on the other hand, can be reluctant to, hesitate about, and deliberate concerning the propriety of what is revealed, and then wilfully refuse to comply with it, without thinking that he does much, or any thing amiss. But this backwardness of the heart is, upon Scripture principles, a sin against God. And every sin against him, the least

least deviation from his will, is an offence infinitely greater than can be committed against any created being. This the Word of God strongly declares; "If one man sinneth against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" I. Sam. ii. 25. Hence we learn, that an offence is to be estimated, by the dignity of the person offended; that the demerit of sin is not to be measured by the idea man has of it, but by the dignity of God. If one man sins against another, the judge shall judge him. Satisfaction may be given, or the affair settled at the discretion of a third person. But if a man sins against the Lord, who is a being of infinite dignity, how can he make up this matter? The offence is of infinite malignity; the satisfaction, therefore, must be of infinite value. And how can he, who is a finite being, all whose powers and faculties are limited, and the effects of which must, therefore, have their bounds, make satisfaction for an infinite offence? It is impossible; since nothing he can do is of infinite value. But sin alienates the will from God. The will of Adam was turned from God as soon as he sinned. And as the sin of Adam was placed to the account of all his posterity;  
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for all in him sinned ; the will of all his posterity was turned from God. " Adam begat a son in his *own* likeness, after *his* image." Gen. v. 3. With a will turned from God. This was evident in the conduct of Cain, his first-born ; and is too plainly seen in all, till mercy interposes, and causes some to differ from others, " By making them a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within them." " There is none righteous, no not one. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. By this one act, then, Adam deprived God of the honour and worship due to him from the whole human race, since he thereby alienated their wills from him.

You may see, then, the nature of Adam's transgression. It was an instance of base ingratitude to God—to disregard the threatenings of the Almighty—to believe the tempter in preference to his Maker—to renounce his allegiance, and aim to act independent of the Divine will—and also to deprive God of the honour and worship due to him from the whole race of mankind. Such was the nature of it ; and if we consider some of its effects,

fects, we may find that they were truly awful. It brought on the loss of the Divine image in the soul. The image of God, in which Adam was created, consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; accordingly Adam was ignorant of nothing that it was necessary for him to know, in order to discharge the duties of that station in which his Maker had placed him. Nor was there in his heart the least tendency to unrighteousness, or unholiness. But after his fall, how little did he retain of these heavenly graces? How little did he know? How foolish his attempt to hide himself from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden? What an ignorance of spiritual things did he discover, by endeavouring to conceal his body with fig-leaves, while he neglected to seek a covering for the nakedness of his soul? His original righteousness, that perfect equity which he once practised and delighted in, was gone. He knew that he had sinned, had wilfully transgressed the command of his Maker; but instead of acknowledging his guilt, and humbling himself before that God whom he had offended, he unjustly endeavoured to transfer the blame of it to another person. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the  
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tree, and I did eat." Gen. iii. 12. The presence of the Almighty was formerly his delight, the joy of his soul; and no wonder; for "in his presence is life." But after he had sinned, as soon as he heard the voice of the Lord God, he fled from him, and attempted to conceal himself. When commanded into his presence, he indeed said, to excuse his conduct, "I was afraid, because I was naked;" ver. 10. But if sin had not caused an aversion to holiness, he would not have fled from this holy God, whom he lately found the source of all his happiness; for, when made sensible that his disobedience was known, that his guilt was discovered, he expressed not the least remorse or fear for what he had done.

The image of the tempter was introduced in his soul. He even dissembled with his Maker. "I was afraid, said he, because I was naked, and I hid myself." This he knew was not the reason. He knew he was naked before he heard the voice of the Lord God, but he did not attempt to hide himself, till he heard it. He knew that his flight was occasioned principally by an aversion to holiness. He had lost the relish of communion with God. He desired not the knowledge, nor presence of God, and therefore he hid him-

himself. His ingratitude to God, and want of affection to Eve, are evident, from his haughty and contemptuous language: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," ver. 12. She, for whom I asked not, whom thou gavest in expectation that she would prove an help for me; she gave me of the tree, and thus caused me to eat. His pride of heart is manifest; for, though convinced of violating the Divine command, and so of exposing himself to the effects of the Divine displeasure, he neither submissively owned his crime, nor once sued for mercy.

It brought a curse on the whole creation. When Adam had sinned, the Lord said unto him, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of the which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life," ver. 17. At the end of the sixth day, when God had finished the works of creation, "He looked upon every thing he had made, and behold it was very good." Gen. i. 31. The vegetable world was all pleasant to the eye, or good for food, and without any hurtful qualities. The animal creation was all submissive to

man, a profitable subject to display the wisdom, power, and goodness of God ; and without any thing noxious in it. But how soon did the fine gold become dim ! Ever since the fall, the earth has brought forth thorns and thistles, qualified to give pain and smart to man. A great part of the animal creation is in open hostility to him, able to inflict on him, pain, torment, death. Under the law, whatsoever was touched by a dead body, or by what had the leprosy, was unclean or polluted. So the effect of Adam's sin was not confined to himself, but extended even to the whole world ; insomuch, that every part of it is polluted in the sight of God. The ground on which he stood was defiled by his sin ; the air which he breathed was tainted by it, and communicated a contagion to the whole creation. By it " the creation was made subject to vanity." Rom. viii. 20. And on this account, " The heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved unto fire." II. Pet. iii. 7. So that the whole creation, which appears so beautiful in our eyes, " groans under bondage," as the apostle expresses it, for Adam's transgression, and for his sin will be destroyed.

It brought a curse on all mankind. " By the disobedience of one (says the apostle) many

many were made finners ;" constituted, or legally adjudged to be finners. Rom. v. 19. " By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," ver. 18. " In Adam all die." I. Cor. xv. 22. Or, rather, " All in Adám, that is, all mankind, die." Not merely are subject to death, as proceeding from him, but are condemned to death on account of his sin ; for, " the wages of sin is death." Rom. vi. 23. and " Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Col. iii. 10. So that " sin hath reigned unto death," over all mankind, as the penalty of disobedience. Nor was it possible for our first parent to have made satisfaction to the injured majesty of God. For what could he have done, which it was not his bounden duty to have done, provided he had never sinned ? At best, he could only have obeyed the law perfectly for the rest of his life ; and this was his proper duty from the first moment of his existence. But supposing he had done this, how could he have merited any thing ? how could he, by a future obedience, have atoned for past disobedience ? Considering the nature of God and man, such is the demerit of sin, that it cannot be atoned for by any created or

finite being. Nor could he have avoided the dreadful punishment of God's wrath and indignation, for there is no resisting his power. In this miserable and helpless condition must he and we, and all his posterity, have continued, under the curse of the law, without a hope of deliverance, if God had not, in infinite mercy, provided a saviour to pay the penalty due to our disobedience, and set him forth for a propitiation for the remission of sins, through faith in his blood. And therefore the Scripture says, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. Not by our repentance, our future obedience, or any satisfaction we made to the Divine Majesty, or any works of righteousness which we had done, or engaged to do. No, says the apostle, "When we were yet without strength," had no power to repent, make satisfaction to God for what we had done, or yield a proper obedience to him for the future; when we had no power to deliver ourselves from the dreadful state into which our guilt had plunged us; "In due time Christ died for the ungodly," ver. 6. "He (God) made him (Christ) to be sin (a sin-offering) for us." II. Cor. v. 21.

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From hence we may see something of the dreadful and infectious nature of sin ; how odious it is in the sight of God, and how determined he is to punish it. This one sin of Adam destroyed the Divine image in his soul—introduced the image of the tempter—brought a curse on the creation, and on the whole race of mankind. Nor could he atone for, nor was it possible to be expiated, but by the death of the only-begotten Son of God. If we were to consider these things in a proper manner, they would probably have some good effect upon us. If we seriously reflected, that every single offence against the Lord contracts a heavier load of guilt than we can possibly remove, we should not dare to offend him through carelessness and wantonness, much less wilfully, and in open defiance of his commands. All those things of which we may make light, as sabbath-breaking, omission of reading the Scriptures, neglect of private and public ordinances, and of training up our children in the way they should go, would then appear, in some measure, as they are ; not trivial offences, but dreadful violations of duty. We might then see that we are alienated from the life of God, that our souls cleave unto the dust, that we have no desire to promote his glory, or our own



eternal interests. Hence also we may learn the extreme folly and danger of those, who are careless of their everlasting state ; or, who refusing to submit to the righteousness of God, go about to establish a righteousness of their own. If one sin brought on so many dreadful effects, what must become of the careless sinner, whose life is one continued scene of rebellion against the Most High ? Where shall the self-righteous stand in the day of judgment, whose best actions, when compared with the demands of the law of God, are not only imperfect, but sinful ; and whose conscience, if awake, condemns him for many transgressions of it ? Thanks be to God, for his unspeakable gift : that he has so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; for if God should enter into judgment, and try us even by our best works, in his sight should no flesh be justified. We have, therefore, abundant reason to lie low before the Almighty, and thankfully adore him for his wisdom and goodness, in contriving and setting forth this wonderful way for sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and be eternally happy. But let us carefully remember, that these inestimable mercies are not for the  
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thoughtless and impenitent sinner—are not for the hypocrite—are not for the formalist, who “draws near to God with his lips, but whose heart is far from him,”—are not for the presumptuous professor, who indeed holds the truth, but holds it in unrighteousness—are not for him, however sincere, who trusts to be saved, either wholly, or in part, by any works, any righteousness of his own. They are only for him, who, by the grace of God has been enabled to see he is a sinner, and sue for mercy ; to renounce all pretensions to merit in himself, and trust wholly for salvation to the Word of God, that there is forgiveness with him, for the sake of the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ ; and who evidences the sincerity of his trust by a grateful obedience to his commands, by studying to worship him in spirit and in truth. For though Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to give his life a ransom for many, yet unless we believe in the Son, with that faith which worketh by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world ; and which is inseparably connected with a life of holiness and righteousness, the mercies of God will avail us nothing, his wrath still abideth on us.

In the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, may we be found in the number of those happy persons who thus believe !

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## DISCOURSE II.

## ON ORIGINAL SIN.

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JOB xiv. 4.

*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?  
Not one.*

WE may have seen in some measure, the nature of Adam's transgression, that it consisted in ingratitude to God—in a disregard to his threatenings—in believing the tempter rather than his Maker—in withdrawing his allegiance, and endeavouring to act independent of God—and in depriving him of the honour and worship due to him from the whole race of mankind. We may have likewise seen some of its awful effects. It destroyed the Divine image in his soul—introduced the image of the tempter--brought a curse on the creation, and on all his posterity; insomuch, that this sin is placed to their account; that they are involved in the guilt, and obnoxious to the punishment due to it, equally the same as if they in their own persons had committed it.

The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, of their being considered and treated as sinners, for the sake of his transgression, has given offence to many. Some, ready to cavil at all that God has revealed, reject it as ridiculous and absurd, because they do not see the propriety of it. But if all is to be rejected, the propriety of which is not plain, our belief must be limited to a very few articles. We see many things about us, to the propriety of which we are quite strangers; but we do not, therefore, doubt of their existence. We behold many effects, the reality of which we are ready to acknowledge, though we are ignorant of their causes, and are therefore absolutely unable to ascertain the propriety between them. It can, therefore, be no just reason to reject any thing which God has revealed, because we do not see the propriety of it.

Others, rather friendly to Revelation, reject it, because they do not see it explicitly declared in the Word of God: they suppose that whatever God designed as an article of faith, he has declared so plainly, that every one of common sense, who searches the Scriptures, must see it. That there is no express mention of a covenant between God and Adam, in which the posterity of Adam  
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are included, we readily acknowledge ; but surely it does not follow that there was no such covenant. Many things in divine Writ are made out by deduction, by analogy, or comparing of Scripture with Scripture ; and this is one of them. In this manner St. Paul has established many truths, from the writings of the Old Testament, which are, by no means, expressly mentioned in them.

How, consistently with equity and justice, Adam's posterity were involved in his guilt; God has not condescended to reveal unto us, and therefore we may be unable to comprehend it ; but the fact itself he has plainly declared ; " In Adam all die." I. Cor. xv. 22. " By the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Rom. v. 18, 19. The meaning of these Scriptures is obvious ; and if we consider the words according to their usual signification, we cannot evade it by any subtleties whatever : they evidently contain these things. " Adam sinned ; by his offence all die : judgment came upon all his posterity to their condemnation." But if his posterity are adjudged sinners, and condemned for his offence, the reason is, because his sin is placed to their account. It may be  
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above our power to evidence the propriety and justice of the imputation of his sin to his posterity ; but the most determined enemies of Revelation cannot prove it improper and unjust. And this is an argument in its favour. For if man cannot explain or reduce it to an absurdity, it came originally from a Being of faculties superior to those of man : it is, therefore, wholly an article of faith, our assent to which is demanded by, and founded on the declaration of God in his Word ; and happy would it be for us, if we were as much affected with the consideration of, as we are actually interested in it. But, instead of denying that there ever was such a covenant, or intimating that if there was one, it was improper and unjust, there is abundant reason to bless God for it, since it was one of the greatest mercies that could have been bestowed.

It was a mercy to Adam as an individual ; for it was a grand scheme, well calculated to deliver him from a state of probation, and make his condition unalterably safe and happy. From his relation to God, as a creature to his Creator, he owed him a perfect, uninterrupted obedience, in thought, word, and deed ; and was liable to forfeit his present happiness, and incur the penalty

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of disobedience, should he offend in one single instance. And, if he had continued happy by continuing obedient, for thousands of years, he would still have been liable, every moment, to forfeit his happiness, and become miserable for ever. For in the very moment of transgression, the condemning sentence of the law would have taken place, consigning him over to the everlasting displeasure of the Most High. How awfully precarious then was his state! unspeakably happy to-day, liable to be inconceivably miserable to-morrow, and to continue so for ever! But by God's condescending to enter into covenant with him, a limit was set to the term of his probation, and if he had continued obedient to the end of that term, he would necessarily have been secured in a state of happiness, as the reward of his obedience to the covenant without a possibility of falling from it. Upon the same principle, it was also a mercy to his posterity. For, supposing them to have been born in a state of innocence, and every one of them liable to stand or fall, to be happy or miserable, by his own conduct; though each of them might have continued in a state of happiness for thousands of years, each of them continuing, during that period, in a state  
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state of perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the law of revelation between a Creator and his creatures; yet, upon the least deviation from that law, each, or all of them would have been miserable for ever, without a chance of being restored to the Divine favour, having justly incurred the penalty of disobedience to that law, which is eternal death. But considering his posterity as parties in his covenant with God, they were liable to be delivered from this awful, uncertain, and dangerous situation, and secured in a state of unchangeable happiness for ever and ever.

But, in order to establish this important doctrine, we may consider more particularly some of the effects of Adam's sin, and which seem to be such proofs of it as are undeniable, and yet so plain, as to be level to the lowest capacities. One of these is the death of infants. Multitudes of the human species are cut off before they know the difference between good and evil, or are capable of being taught it. How shall we account for this? The apostle declares, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men; for that, or in whom, all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. So that none die, but on account of sin;  
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“ for the wages of sin is death.” Rom. vi. 23. Infants then die because they are sinners. But they cannot be sinners by any personal transgression of their own ; for they are incapable of it ; they know not what transgression means. The reason, therefore, why they die is, because Adam’s transgression is imputed to them. Accordingly, the apostle declares, “ Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” Rom. v. 14. who had not sinned as a covenant-head, and so brought destruction on those who should proceed from them ; who had not personally eaten of the forbidden fruit, but who were condemned to death, because the sin of Adam was placed to their account. It was proved, that Adam’s sin consisted in ingratitude to God—in disregarding his threatenings—in believing the tempter rather than his Maker—in withdrawing his allegiance from God, and endeavouring to act independent of him—and in depriving him of the honour and worship due from the whole race of mankind. Now these things were not confined to him ; they are more or less common to all his posterity. All have the root of them in their hearts, and discover it by their practice, till it pleases a merciful  
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God to give them to know him, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. This may be thought a heavy charge, and brought merely to support an opinion wholly void of truth. How heavy soever the charge may appear, perhaps nothing can be more easily proved to a considerate mind. Favour me with your attention while I undertake to prove it.

Ingratitude was one part of Adam's sin ; and with this his whole posterity is poisoned. We are all pensioners on the bounty of God ; his goodness has followed us all our days ; He giveth us, day by day, our daily bread. All the good things we enjoy, the food we eat, the raiment we put on, the conveniencies and comforts of life, all proceed from him ; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. What is more, to all they come unmerited, and to most unasked for. We may look no farther than to secondary causes, and ascribe them to the assistance of friends, to our own industry, knowledge and prudent management. But who raises up friends ? Is it not God, who has all hearts in his hands ? Who bestows industry, knowledge, or prudent management ? Is it not God ? He, then, is the Giver of every good and perfect gift ; the first cause, the first Mover of all things. It would avail us nothing to plough  
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and sow, or use the labour of the hands, if God did not vouchsafe fruitful seasons, and thus give an increase. The toil of men would be in vain unless he condescended to grant his blessing. But what returns do we make? Hear what he said to his people of old: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Isa. i. 3. The brute beasts are sensible of, and grateful for what they receive; and all, in their respective stations, proclaim the glory of their Maker. But man, though blessed with infinitely greater mercies, is unmindful of the hand which bestows them. Man alone doth not consider, doth not make a suitable return for the blessings he enjoys. A heavy charge this against his professing people! But is it not equally applicable to the bulk of mankind? Who is less in their thoughts than the Almighty? They can partake of his bounty and retire to repose, satiated with his fulness, and yet unthankful for what they receive. They can rise from sleep, like the beast from his lair, without one grateful acknowledgement to Him, who watched and protected them in that defenceless state. Every vanity, every trifle, every prospect of advantage or pleasure, is preferred  
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to God. There is scarcely a creature, with which they hold not more communion than with their Maker. If you deny this, say, whence the visible indifference to, not to say hatred, of religious exercises? Whence the neglect of public worship, and the irreverent conduct during the time of it? What thanks has God for the fruits of the earth—for riches, health, strength, reason, for the blessings of his providence, and more especially, for the blessings of his grace? How are communities governed?—harvests ended?—sabbaths spent?—time and other talents employed?—to the glory of Him who gave them? No. The good things of this life are, in general, used as weapons of rebellion against him. You will in vain endeavour to palliate these charges. They are notorious, and incontestable proofs of man's ingratitude to God.

Another part of his sin was, to disregard the threatenings of the Almighty. "In the day that thou eatest thereof shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. Yet notwithstanding what the Lord denounced, he did eat, he sinned, he fell. Would to God there was no reason to say, in this we also imitate him! The Lord declares, "he will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. xxxiv. 7. "The soul that

that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. xviii. 4.  
 "The soul that doth ought presumptuously,  
 the same reproacheth the Lord, and that  
 soul shall be cut off from among his people."  
 Numb. xv. 30. "The wicked shall be  
 turned into hell." Psalm ix. 17. "Shall  
 go into everlasting punishment." Matt. xxv.  
 46. "Prepared for the devil and his angels."  
 ver. 41. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed  
 from heaven with his mighty angels, in  
 flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that  
 know not God, and that obey not the gospel  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be pu-  
 nished with everlasting destruction from the  
 presence of the Lord." II. Thes. i. 8, 9,  
 10. Declarations these sufficiently awful,  
 one would suppose, to awaken our fears,  
 and keep them constantly alarmed; yet how  
 little are they regarded; they are made by the  
 eternal God, whose power there is no resist-  
 ing, and who altereth not the thing that  
 goeth out of their lips; yet he is provoked  
 every day by the wilful disobedience of mil-  
 lions. He has sworn, and he cannot deny  
 himself, that the wicked shall not go unpun-  
 ished; yet all manner of wickedness is com-  
 mitted with greediness. He has manifested  
 his fixed determination to punish sinners, by  
 visiting with his judgment in all ages, many  
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offenders, by overthrowing cities, by destroying a whole world ; but still sin abounds. We hear of these declarations and judgments so often, that they are rooted in our memories ; yet so slight is their impression on our hearts, that a sordid gratification can frequently prevail with us to disregard the power of his wrath ; can prevail with us wilfully and presumptuously to offend him, though we know not but that, in the next moment, vengeance may hurry us into everlasting torments.

It was a part of Adam's sin to believe the tempter rather than his Maker. And this runs through the whole race of mankind, till mercy interposes. The tempter is in Scripture called "the god of this world." II. Cor. iv. 4. And because the world and all its pleasures are, by Divine permission, under the government of this his irreconcilable enemy, the friendship of the World is said to be "enmity with God," Jam. iv. 4. We may now apply this : God, in his word, has said, "Love not the world ; neither the things that are in the world ;" that is, in preference to him. "If any man loves the world," more than God, "the love of the Father is not in him." I. John ii. 15. His enemy sets before us the pleasures, honours, and riches of the world, saying, as he once did

did to our Saviour, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" if you will disregard the Most High, and take these for your chief good. Whom now do we believe? Instead of shunning them, as baits laid to ensnare our affections, to alienate our hearts from God, and ruin our souls, do we not pursue and pant after them, as alone able to make us happy? Do we not court every novelty, and catch at every trifle, how ridiculous soever, if it is stamped with the name of fashion or pleasure? We too plainly shew whom we believe, and to whom we give the preference. Nor do we less avoid the honours of the world. Look among the great, and see how eagerly and anxiously distinctions are sought for.—What pains are taken to gain a title or a garter, though they can give no more of solid happiness than a child's rattle? Yet for these will many submit to the most despicable meanness, and even part with substance, time, reputation, conscience. You can scarce meet a man in office, who is not proud of it; and by the lower sort especially, how readily is respect paid to those in power, even to such as have nothing else to recommend them? Instead of despising the riches of the world, poverty appears so deformed and alarming, that



that we shun it as the greatest evil. More pains are in general taken to get a good estate, than a good conscience. The rich man, with little more sense than the wild ass's colt, shall receive our respect and admiration, while we overlook even great abilities, if joined with poverty. And though our Lord says, " If ye thus have respect of persons, are ye not judges of evil thoughts? Jam. chap. ii. How few, in comparison, believe him. How ready are we to imagine, that we may set our affections on the things of the world, and comply with its customs and fashions, and yet be good Christians, in the road that leadeth to everlasting life? It is not uncommon to see a man, who has already more than enough to maintain his family with decency and respect, anxiously labouring after the things of this world ; endeavouring to add house to house, field to field, estate to estate, and not once think his eternal salvation is endangered by this practice. Thousands, who spend their lives in a round of pleasure, if they abstain from those gross sins which the world agrees to condemn, think all will go well at last ; that everlasting happiness, by the mercy of God, will assuredly be their portion. And how common is it to find a person, who consumes  
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his days in the pursuit of worldly distinctions, value himself upon his moral character, and think it impossible that he should perish eternally? Our Saviour says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all those things," all temporal good things, that are really necessary for your present subsistence "shall be added unto you." Matt. vi. 33. Do we believe him? If our practice is to furnish us with an answer, we must say, No. We rather take the liberty to reverse his advice. "Seek first the things of this world, and the kingdom of God and his righteousness shall be added unto you. Boldly pursue them as your chief good, and never entertain a thought, that by so doing, you shall hazard the displeasure of your Maker. For, is it not commanded us to provide for our families? and are not the mercies of God infinite? It is absurd, then, to suppose that he will punish any person with eternal torments." In this manner do we think of things temporal and eternal. Such is the language of our hearts concerning them, and agreeable to this is our conduct.

Adam sinned by withdrawing his allegiance from God, and acting independent of him. Is not this our case? When a King enacts just and equal laws, and which evi-

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dently tends to the good of his subjects, he expects that they should readily and cheerfully obey him. This he looks upon as the proper test of their allegiance; and, indeed, without this, no professions of respects and reverence to his person and family will prove them friends to his government. But if refusing to make these the rule of their conduct, they generally act as if no such laws had ever been made, he justly considers them as disaffected to his authority. There is an unalterable duty we owe to God, arising from the relation of a rational creature to his Creator. This is, by many, called the law of nature, and is supposed to be written in the heart of every man. Without stopping to consider this very disputable opinion, we may observe, that this law, which consists chiefly in loving the Lord our God with all our souls, God has enforced by a revelation of his will in the Scriptures. If then we are faithful subjects, this is the rule of our conduct; by this we govern our thoughts and actions. But, alas! who in comparison can be found, who thinks and acts according to this rule? In general, we do not seem to see the necessity of it; we can suffer days, weeks, and months to pass away, without opening this blessed book, in order to consult

sult the oracles of God. And when we read or hear the commands contained in it, can refuse to obey them, without any hesitation, if they thwart our inclinations; can dispute their truth and authority, if they do not exactly agree with the opinions we have already entertained, and embraced without proper examination. What now is this, but to make our own will the rule of our conduct, to withdraw our allegiance from God, and endeavour to act independent of him? If we were to inform our Sovereign that his laws were not good, for they laid a restraint upon our inclinations; that they were not founded in equity, for they did not entirely correspond with our ideas of right and wrong, and that therefore we would not obey them—that we were determined to consider ourselves no farther concerned with them, than they allowed us the liberty of acting according to our own humour; would he not justly esteem us despisers of his authority, rebels and traitors to his government? Most certainly he would. We cannot, then, be undeserving the same characters, while we treat, in the same manner, the glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth.

The other part of Adam's sin was to deprive God of the worship due to him from

the whole race of mankind. In this we likewise imitate him. We have the same principle within, and it discovers itself in a similar practice. You will, perhaps, say, how can this be? I answer; the worship due to God consists in an universal submission to his will, and a grateful acknowledgement of his mercies, in the ways of his own appointment. Now of this worship we deprive him, when we refuse to perform it ourselves, or, what in us lies, hinder others from performing it. That we naturally refuse to perform it ourselves is an indisputable truth, and too plain even to be denied. For the Scriptures declare, "the carnal mind (which is the mind of all men by nature) is enmity against God!" Rom. viii. 7. And surely we are not willing to do what we hate. Our practice is agreeable to this principle; we neglect to hold communion with him in our closets; we do not worship him in our families; and we keep from his public ordinances as often as we please. Private devotion is generally considered as wholly unnecessary. Family worship is treated as a proof of being righteous over much. And public ordinances are used to gratify curiosity, to keep up a little outward decency, or destroy some time which hangs heavy on our hands.

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That we would hinder others from worshipping God, is evident from innumerable facts. No sooner does a person enter upon a life of seriousness, than we are apt to imagine he is beside himself; and from our great regard to his character and best interests, would fain persuade him to lay aside his Bible, and give up all acts of devotion, as the only way for him to recover his senses. If this has not the desired effects, we endeavour to laugh him out of his strange enthusiastic notions. And, if this will not do, persecution in one shape or other generally follows: he is misrepresented, treated with disrespect, ill-nature, and perhaps with violence. If this method does not succeed, we generally brand him with opprobrious distinctions, and load him with marks of infamy; fully verifying the declaration of the Apostle, "As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so is it now." Galat. iv. 29. Many fall into this snare, and are prevailed on to lay aside a religious life, which they seemed hopefully to have begun, unable to bear the scoff of the libertine, the banter of the thoughtless, or the sneer of the formalist; not considering that awful declaration of our Saviour, "Whosoever is ashamed of me

and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Mark viii. 38. These are notorious facts—there are those among us who allow themselves in such practices. Let me prevail with you seriously to consider what you are doing; the opposition you make is not to man but God; it does not proceed from a dislike to some particular persons or doctrines, considered in themselves, but from an enmity to that which is good. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16. You will not give God the honour due unto his name, but will, to the utmost of your power, prevent others from giving it. Reflect on your conduct to your own son—to him in whose welfare your happiness was once centered—to him for whose improvement no expence was thought too great. With what transport did you consider him, while he advantageously added knowledge to knowledge? How did it warm your affections to reflect, that education, and the love of character, had preserved him from the grosser pollutions of the world? Who then, in your opinion, was, for his years, more wise,

wise, more religious? But, why this change in your conduct? why this persecution? Because he sees that the form of godliness avails nothing—that the power of it must reign in the heart—that, notwithstanding his various attainments, he is a fool, being destitute of that knowledge which alone can make him wise unto salvation. He sees something of the holiness and spirituality of the law of God, that it is exceeding broad—that he has transgressed, and is condemned by it—that he is a depraved, fallen creature. He sees the imperfection of his obedience; that “all his righteousness is as filthy rags,” and a necessity of an interest in a better righteousness than his own. He sees the sinfulness of “drawing nigh unto God with his lips, while the heart is far from him,” and therefore would “worship him in spirit and in truth, through faith in the blood of Jesus, who gave his life a ransom for many; and by whose obedience many shall be made righteous.” On this account, this favourite is sunk in your esteem. Once it was your study to please him—your endeavours even anticipated his desires. Now, his earnest exortations cannot prevail for an hour’s uninterrupted retirement, to hold communion with his Maker. He, at the sight of whom your



heart used to leap for joy, is now loathsome to you. Blush then at your aversion to holiness, when the least glimpse of it in your own son can make you a monster to him. If ever God shall open your eyes, and give you to consider, the remembrance of this conduct will pierce your heart with many sorrows; and if that mercy is not vouchsafed you in this life, our Saviour has already pronounced your doom; "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones (that trust in me) it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he himself cast into the midst of the sea." By the sin of Adam, the image of God, in which he was created, and which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, was destroyed in his soul, and the image of the tempter introduced. With regard to this, that which was threatened was literally accomplished, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. Accordingly, his whole posterity come into the world destitute of this divine image. By Nature we are wholly ignorant of God; nor can we possibly know any thing of him without instruction or revelation. Without revelation, we can at first have no knowledge but by the help of our senses; and spiritual things.

things are not the objects of them. We can neither see, hear, feel, smell, nor taste them; we may indeed hear of them; but that supposes the instruction of another, the assistance of revelation. And even what we hear, we cannot possibly understand, till we have been taught the language in which our Instructor speaks. As therefore God is a spirit, we cannot possibly know any thing of him, but by revelation. "The world by wisdom knew not God;" I. Cor. i. 21. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I. Cor. ii. 14.

In what age did that man live, who, merely by contemplating the works of creation; was enabled to discover the being and attributes of God? What were the wisest Heathens able to learn of this glorious Being? With all their boasted wisdom they continued ignorant of him. With the utmost efforts of human reason, the assistance of tradition, and the advantage of their opinions, who had gone before them in this inquiry, they could not search out the Almighty. Some few of them, indeed, by conversing with persons who had seen or heard the oracles of God, obtained the no-

tion of one supreme Being; but who, or what he was, they were by no means able to discover. "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" Job xxi. 15. "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice—I know not the Lord?" Exodus v. 2. The religion of the world in general, for near four thousand years, was no better than the worship of stocks and stones, of men and devils. Belshazzar and his princes and nobles "praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Dan. v. 4. The people of Ashdod were so foolishly ignorant, that, though their idol Dagon had fallen down twice before the ark of the Lord, and "the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold, and only the stump of Dagon was left to him," I. Sam. v. 4. yet they set it up again in its former place, and worshipped it as their god. What an account does the prophet Isaiah give of man's foolish ignorance of divine things. "He planteth an ark, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it and taketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh

maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god." Isaiah xliv. 14, 17. And even since the Lord has been pleased to make known the fullest revelation of his will, how ready are we to form ideas of it, which are inconsistent with what he has declared. Instead of acknowledging a perfect harmony among all his attributes, we endeavour to destroy it—to exalt one of them at the expence of another—to magnify his mercy, while we rob him of his justice. This is too plainly attested by some fashionable schemes of divinity of the present day, in which the way of acceptance, or reconciliation with God, are stated in a manner totally irreconcilable with the scriptural account of his justice, how honourable soever it may seem to be to his mercy. Instead of righteousness, which consists in the constant love and practice of equity; a principle of selfishness predomi-

nates in the whole race of mankind. Every one is, by Nature, biassed to his own interests, and inclined to make his own happiness the end of his pursuits; and accordingly, he labours to promote his own interest and happiness, more than the interest and happiness of others. In some, this principle is more strong than it is in others, but the effects of it are, more or less, evident in all. Who finds a heart so enlarged to mankind, that he does, and loves to do unto all, without a single exception, as much as he wishes each individual should do to him in similar circumstances! Many may boast of their integrity in their dealings with others; but is it always from a love of righteousness? Would they never take the advantage of others, if they were sure they should not be detected? But farther, if our conduct towards our neighbour has the appearance of uprightness, who renders unto God the things that are God's?—gives him his heart?—submits to his will in all things?—acts constantly with a view to his glory? Alas! the bulk of mankind never think of this as their bounden duty, much less do they perform it. I may say, without any fear of the contrary being proved, that not one *endeavours* to act in this manner, without the *interposition* of a Divine power; and then finds

finds that in every duty he falls short, that there is iniquity in his best performances. Instead of loving holiness, "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," Gen. viii. 21. tending to what is inconsistent with the will of God. And when we hear the true character of God, the language of the heart to him is, "depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job xxi. 14. We are told, "the devil is a liar, and the father of it." John viii. 44. And the same word of truth declares of the sons of Adam, "they go astray, as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Psalm lviii. 3. From the first dawn of reason, their corrupt nature breaks forth in sinful practices, in contradiction and opposition to the will of God. The proneness to the evil of lying, in the most literal sense, is particularly evident in those, who, not restrained by authority and advice, give a loose to their passions and inclinations; and the rest are so far from being altogether free from it, that civility and complaisance (which as usually managed, are only a more refined species of lying) are an essential part of a polite education.

Pride, another part of his character, is undeniably in the heart of man. We naturally think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; and, discontented with what we have, desire a station superior to that which Providence has allotted us. "Whence come wars and fightings among you?" saith the apostle. James iv. 1. The wise man answers, "only by pride cometh contention." Prov. xiii. 10. How ready are we to receive an affront! how backward to own we are wrong, when we have acted improperly to others! we are wise in our own conceit, and lean to our own understanding as a sufficient guide, though ignorant of, and utterly unable to attain, by ourselves, that wisdom which alone is profitable to direct. "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Job xi. 12. And even when we get a notion that we are transgressors, (though redemption is held out to us freely, without money, and without price) "we go about to establish a righteousness of our own, and will not submit to the righteousness which is of God." Rom. x. 3. And therefore, when the gospel comes with power, it is employed in "casting down imaginations, and every high thought that exalteth itself against the knowledge

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ledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

II. Cor. x. 5.

We may have seen the nature of Adam's sin, that it consisted in ingratitude to God—in disregarding his threatenings—in believing the tempter in preference to his Maker—in renouncing his allegiance to God, and acting independent of him—and in depriving him of the worship due to him from the whole race of mankind. Moreover, that it destroyed the divine image in the soul, and introduced the image of the tempter. It has likewise been made plain, that these very instances of guilt run more or less through the whole race of mankind; that the divine image is destroyed, and the image of the tempter introduced in the souls of all his posterity. But perhaps you will ask, if we do not learn these things one of another? No; they are born with us; "Behold, says David, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalm li. 5. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Not one. Job xiv. 4. Which implies, that Adam being defiled through transgression, all his posterity are likewise defiled. So that all are "estranged from God from the womb." Psalm lviii. 3. This



## THE PRINCIPLES

depravity of heart, this aversion to what is good, and delight in what is evil, we derived from our parents; and from them it may be traced backwards to our first parent Adam, from whom it originally proceeded. No doubt, the malignity of it is aggravated by bad example; but some of its dreadful effects are evident before we can possibly learn them from those about us. Anger, cruelty, self-will, impatience of control, and other fruits of a corrupt nature, may be observed in the infant at the breast. Shall we say then, that we are not concerned in Adam's transgression, when the characters of it are so legible in our whole race? But if this is not sufficient to convince you, hear again (and they cannot be too often repeated) the positive declaration of the God of truth; "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or, in whom) all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. By Adam sin entered into the world: death succeeded as the punishment of sin; "for the wages of sin is death." And the reason why death passed upon all men, is, "for that, or in whom, all have sinned;" that is, have sinned in that sin *which entered into the world by Adam, and succeeded by death as its punishment.* And,

And, as no one, who is not guilty, can be justly obnoxious to punishment; therefore, all the posterity of Adam are justly chargeable with the guilt of, and liable to the punishment due to his sin. Hence it is said, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" Rom. v. 19. were constituted sinners, and are to be dealt with as such by a law of equity. Wherefore it is declared, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Rom. v. 18. And this condemnation was unto death. "In Adam all die." I. Cor. xv. 22. All his posterity sinned in him—all partook of his guilt—and all therefore are by nature under the sentence of condemnation. On this account, the apostle declares, "we are by nature the children of wrath." Ephes. ii. 3. And the consequence of this condemnation is not merely corporeal death, in the dissolution of the body, but spiritual death, in the loss of the divine image in the soul; and this to be succeeded by eternal misery, at the re-union of the soul and body after the resurrection; "for the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. xxv. 46.

We have here the outline of a true, though awful picture of what man is by nature.

ture—a corrupt, sinful creature—a rebel against his Maker. Moreover, to his sin in Adam he has added innumerable instances of personal transgression; for the law requires a perfect obedience in thought, word, and deed; and “every imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually.” Such then is man; not as some fondly imagine, an innocent, upright, harmless creature, but a rebel against his Maker, by nature and practice; and, as such, under a sentence of condemnation, which renders him obnoxious to eternal misery, by the just judgment of God. What then shall he do? shall he prepare himself to undergo the deserved punishment of his disobedience? Alas! “Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?” Shall he undertake to satisfy the offended majesty of his Maker? How can dust and ashes make satisfaction for transgressions against the eternal God? The sincerest sorrow, the most piercing remorse, a future, and (if it was possible) unfinning obedience, are absolutely insufficient for this purpose, because they are not of infinite value. Shall he lie down in despair? Blessed be God, there is forgiveness with him. He has given his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice for sin; and as a proof of his unspeakable loving kindness, bath

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hath commanded it to be preached to all the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

May the wisdom and power of God enable us to embrace this mercy, lest the things which belong to our peace should be for ever hid from our eyes ! Christ is the only way to happiness, the only city of refuge, from the pursuit of the destroyer : " For whosoever hath not the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

many instances, the folly, and felt the sad effects of their choice, they delight in one as the most suitable and desirable good, and court and cleave to the other as the most excellent of the earth.

In those who are in some measure, and even in those who are much restrained by early instruction, we may yet, in general, see that a propensity to evil is predominant. Education indeed, and the fear of censure, may prevent the more open and gross effects of it, holding in, as with a curb, the inordinate bent of nature; yet words and actions will frequently discover, that there is in the heart a relish for, and a desire to indulge in what religion, reason, and even decency forbid. Observe the conduct of most who are called moral men. How backward are they to seriousness! how prone to levity! how reluctantly are they clothed in the garb of religion! how willingly do they conform to the customs and fashions of the world! what a fear do they discover of being thought religious, righteous over much! how boldly will they sometimes pursue what evidently leads to evil! how unaffected and dull are they while reading the Scriptures! how charmed and transported at the perusal of a novel! These things plainly proceed from

from the same principles of love to what is evil, and of aversion to what is good ; though more refined in the choice of their objects, and more restrained as to the grossness of their effects. The Scriptures assure us, that “ if any man love the world, (delights in it above all other things) the love of the Father is not in him.” I. John ii. 15. And they confirm this important but disregarded truth, by the following declaration, “ The friendship of the world is enmity with God.” Whosoever, therefore, prefers the friendship of the world to the friendship of God, or “ will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God.” James iv. 4. They likewise command, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.” It has been seen that we naturally love the world, and are inclined to that which is evil. A change, therefore, must be wrought in us, before our tempers can be agreeable to what the Divine oracles require : they demand, that instead of loving the world supremely, there should be nothing on earth that we desire in comparison of God ; and instead of delighting in, we should abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good. In a word, whereas our will and affections are naturally prone  
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to that which is evil, such a change must take place, that they may be habitually inclined to what is good.

This is what the Scriptures mean by Regeneration, or being born again. The necessity of this change is indisputable, and the change itself indispensable; for "without holiness (to which our hearts are naturally averse) no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. And therefore our Saviour declares to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. Unless such a change is wrought in him, however zealous he may be in the cause of religion—though he may warmly recommend it to others, and enforce the necessity of it, both by precept and example—tho' he may punctually observe the duties of the closet and family—may constantly attend on outward ordinances—may give all his goods to feed the poor, and think he is ready to give his body to be burned—may, in the opinion of the world, and even in his own esteem, be an eminent Christian, all will avail him nothing; for, "unless he is born again," renewed in heart, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

St. Paul, speaking of the great things which God hath designed for those whom he  
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has ordained to eternal life, says, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. viii. 29. Whom he particularly favoured, those he also ordained to partake of the temper of Jesus Christ; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "to be partakers of a divine nature." II. Peter i. 4. By considering some of the parts of our Saviour's character, we may more easily understand what is meant by this image into which we must be changed. Our Lord "was meek and lowly in heart"—such must we become, our haughty and proud spirit being brought into subjection; he was patient under the most pressing trials and afflictions—so must we be, and not murmur and repine at any thing the Lord is pleased to lay on us. He forgave, and even prayed for his murderers—thus, laying aside all malice and revenge, we must be willing to "bless them that curse us," and "pray for them that despitefully use us." He studied to promote the glory of God in all things—in like manner, the desire of the praise of man, of seeking honour one of another, being mortified, whatsoever we do, whether we eat, or whether we drink, we must do all to the glory of God. He went about, doing good—thus, striving against



all selfishness and narrowness of spirit, we must, with enlargedness of heart, be ready to "do good to all, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." He was constant in prayer, and ascribing glory to God—thus, our natural aversion to these duties being overcome, we must look up to God for all things, and acknowledge our dependence on him, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. We must not act as if all our sufficiency was from ourselves, and be ready to ascribe our success to our own wisdom and ability, but to the direction and blessing of an over-ruling Providence. "Mine own right hand and mine own arm have gotten me the victory, and brought this mighty thing to pass," is the language of the natural, ignorant man. The enlightened, established Christian looks up to the Fountain of good in the hour of success, and says, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name be the praise." When Christ was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not—of such a temper must we be. Instead of resenting every real or imaginary affront, we should commit our souls unto God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Instead of commencing judges and executioners in our own cause,

cause, we must give place unto wrath and leave it with him who judgeth righteously, and who has said, "Vengeance is mine," the right to punish belongs solely to me, and "I will repay." He emptied himself, became of no reputation, for the good of others, in order to make peace between God and man. After this manner must we act, not haughtily insisting on the utmost we may fancy is our right, but in many things wave our just claim, and submit our own private advantage to the glory of God and the good of our fellow-creatures. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." II. Cor. viii. 9. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." I. John iii. 16. Our natural dispositions, we find, are so far from being agreeable, that they are contrary to the temper of our Lord and Saviour, and therefore, as all that shall be saved must be conformed to his image, a change must be wrought in their hearts; their desires and aversions must be opposite to what they are by nature.

We are not to imagine that the most eminent Christian is so changed in this life, as to be wholly conformed to the image of Christ. No. The better he is acquainted with himself, the more ready he is to adopt the mournful complaint of the apostle, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Rom. vii. 22—24. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other," Gal. v. 17. that is, keep up a constant opposition to, or warfare with each other. So that the body of sin, that humbling monitor of what he is by nature, will not be done away till death; and therefore he cannot be perfect while on earth, but will ever have reason to say, even to his last moments, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I. John i. 8. Yet, watchfully diligent in the use of the means which God has appointed, and exercising himself to have a conscience void of offence, he will "grow in grace, and in the know-

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II. Pet. iii. 18. "Grace and peace will be multiplied unto him through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." I. Pet. i. 2. He will gradually "go on to perfection." Heb. vi. 1. His understanding will be more enlightened—his will more submissive to the will of God—his affections weaned from things below, and set more on things above—and when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, he will be changed into the glorious image of Him "who was slain, and redeemed him unto God by his blood." Rev. v. 9.

We read, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. That "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil," and cannot "look on iniquity," (Habak. i. 13.) with approbation. Even "the stars are not pure in his sight; how much less man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm." Job xxv. 5, 6. The law of God, according to St. Paul, is holy, just, and good, but we are carnal, as it were, sold under sin. It is therefore absurd to imagine, that we can ever be partakers of the kingdom of heaven without an inward conformity to this holy, just, and good law of our God. A negative obedience, or abstaining

from open fins, together with an outward conformity to the letter of the law, will not do: we must delight in the law after the inward man—must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well—must find that his ways are ways of pleasantness, and his commandments not grievous—must not only not take pleasure in wickedness, but really hate every false and evil way. Our affections must be raised from things below, and set chiefly on things above; and then our conversation will be, in some measure, as in heaven; not absorbed with the trifles of common occurrences, but often leading to the wonders of redeeming love, the mercies of God through Christ Jesus, the unspeakable happiness of an eternal state: and when our hearts are there, our treasures will be there also; not subject to the corruption of moths, or the violence of robbers, but secure and glorious, immortal, incorruptible, under the Almighty protection of our heavenly Father. In a word, our hearts must be delivered, or cast into the mould of the gospel: we must be created again in righteousness and true holiness. We may see, then, there is no being conformed to the *image or temper of Jesus Christ without a change is wrought in the heart; and that,*  
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unless we are thus conformed, it is impossible to attain to that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; or, in the words of our Saviour, "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

We may hence see the error of those who hope God will pardon their sins, and take them to his mercy, though they do not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Nothing is more certain, than that God is willing to be merciful to sinners: he declares, that he desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. He gave his only-begotten Son to die an ignominious, an accursed death, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And by his word, his providences, and his ministers, he is continually expostulating with them, as with the Jews of old, why will ye die? Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life. But then his mercy can be effectual to those only who see they stand in need of it, on account of their former transgressions; to those who are enabled to repent truly of their former sins, and by God's assisting grace steadfastly purpose to lead a new life; to those who heartily embrace the mercy set forth in the gospel, trusting for pardon and

acceptance with God, to his word, through the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ. And the faith of such a person, whenever it is sincere, springs from a real, and is accompanied with an increasing, gradual change of heart. To imagine, therefore that God will pardon any person's sins, and take him to his mercy, who is not changed in heart, from evil to good, who knows nothing of this death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, is certainly wrong, and will assuredly prove fatal to all who make it the ground of their hope : it is an imagination contrary to the whole tenour of Scripture, to the repeated declarations of God concerning this matter, and to the express words of the Redeemer on this subject, "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

But supposing that God would have mercy on those who are not changed in heart ; supposing that he would pardon their sins, and receive them into his presence, what would it avail them ? Their condition would not be better than it is now, but perhaps worse ; for there are no sensual gratifications in heaven ; no pleasures to suit the inclinations such persons have at present. They are all *of a spiritual nature*, and "the natural man receiveth

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I. Cor. ii. 14. According to what is revealed of it, the happiness of heaven consists chiefly in beholding the infinite glories of God; in praising him for the display of his glorious attributes in the creation and redemption of the world through Jesus Christ: to him cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory. They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy Lord, God, Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." Rev. iv. 8—11. "Hallelujah, for the Lord, God omnipotent reigneth." Rev. xix. 6. "Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii. 10. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,



heard, I say, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." Rev. v. 12, 13. What happiness could unregenerate persons have in such employments? Is it any satisfaction to them to hear or read of these things? Do they now take pleasure in holiness? When they attend to public worship, is it not with reluctance, with constraint, corresponding in a great measure, to the complaint of the Jews. What a weariness is the sabbath? when will it be over? Or if they find any thing agreeable then, does it not proceed from some object inconsistent with the glory of God? From the consideration, perhaps, that they have been doing their duty, and shall receive a reward for it at his hands. This refuge of lies, however it may please and buoy up the mind at present, will shortly be done away. The form of godliness, in any degree of strictness they think unnecessary, but the power of it they exclaim against as mere hypocrisy, or rank enthusiasm. Instead of engaging their approbation and delight, it raises their indignation and aversion. If then the view of the faint dawn of holiness, which alone is *attainable in this life*, gives them pain, what  
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torment would the full blaze of it in heaven occasion ! If the glimmerings of holiness, clouded and obscured by sinfulness and corruption, cause uneasiness, how intolerable would it be to behold holiness itself, unfulfilled by any imperfection, and shining in unclouded Majesty ? It is therefore impossible that any unregenerate person can be happy hereafter ; for even supposing that God would pardon his sins, and take him to his mercy, (which he most assuredly will not) heaven itself would be to him a place of insupportable torment. If it should be imagined, that this change of heart is necessary only for libertines and profligates, who give the loose to their passions ; who commit all manner of wickedness with greediness, unrestrained by the sense of duty, the shame of censure, or the fear of punishment ; I answer, it is equally necessary for all mankind ; for the hearts of all, without a single exception, are prone to evil, to what is inconsistent with the will of God ; and their own happiness. The outward conduct of some is, indeed, decent and commendable, when compared with that of others, but the hearts of all are "deceitful and desperately wicked." Jerem. xviii. 9.

The image of God, in which we were created, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, is lost by our sin in Adam. We come into the world wholly destitute of it, so that "our souls cleave unto the dust." We seek our happiness only in things of this world, and are "alienated from the life of God;" but, as "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," the bias of the soul must be turned. A change of heart is therefore necessary for all, before they can become "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." So that, "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

But if a change of heart is indispensably necessary, how is it to be wrought in us? has man the power of doing it, or must it be accomplished by some external superior agent? I answer, man has not the power of doing it. He is no more able to change his heart, than to pluck the sun from the firmament. This thousands can testify. Every one, who, through mercy, is given to know himself as a fallen, depraved creature, wishes, above all things, that the tendencies to evil, which he often finds working in him, were entirely done away. These are his chief *burdens*. He uses every mean in order to  
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this end, but in vain. If this will not be admitted as an argument, we may observe, that no man can do any thing but by the exertion of some principle or power within himself; so that man can do nothing good, till he has within himself a principle of goodness. But, in the heart of man, there is naturally no such thing. "The carnal mind (which is the mind of all men by nature) is enmity against God;" Rom. viii. 7. and, in consequence, is enmity against all that is really good. To suppose, therefore, that man can change his own heart, is to suppose an effect without a cause; it is to suppose something can be done, when there is nothing to do it. But supposing man had the power, we can scarcely imagine that he would employ it for this purpose; for every imagination of the heart of man being only evil continually, what he esteems his greatest happiness, proceeds from a principle of evil. To fancy then that he would change his heart, so as habitually to delight in what is good, is to suppose that he would part with what he esteems his greatest happiness, and fix his affections on what is opposite to it; that is, habitually choose and delight in what is his aversion. We may illustrate this by considering the state of a person's mind.

mind, when he is first told of these things; he hears he must have something, which he knows he has not; but does this incline him to seek after it? No; he imagines it is not necessary. When it is pressed on him as a duty to seek to God for it, he affects to disbelieve it. When it is declared to be absolutely necessary, that it is contained in the express words of our Lord, he would fain persuade himself that the words are to be understood in another sense; that regeneration signifies nothing more than reformation; that it implies not a change of heart, but only of the life; and strengthens himself in his opinion, because he finds that few persons, in comparison, know any thing of this matter. Little, if at all, does he attend to the words of our Lord, "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Mat. vii. 14. All this while he is sensible that it is desirable to be delivered from the tyranny of boisterous passions, to be freed from the captivity of sensual pleasures, the deceits of which he has frequently experienced. Thus he endeavours to impose upon himself in a matter of the last importance, and which he cannot but acknowledge would be attended with happy consequences;

quences; yet he is so far from having the power of doing what his reason approves, that he has no inclination to it; and will sooner hazard the probability of continuing in bondage to his lusts, all his days, and even of perishing eternally, than in earnest apply to God for it. But when the Lord convinces a man that he is a sinner, marshalling his sins before his face, and shewing him that he is a child of wrath—when he disarms him of his boasted pleas, convincing him that all his righteousness is as filthy rags, that by the works of the law shall no man living be justified—when he unveils to him the necessity of a Saviour, and a change of heart—when he convinces him, that unless he is born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; how does he act? Does he immediately set about changing his heart? Alas! though he may wish for this change above all things, he has an humbling abasing experience, that he is unable to effect it. A man never seeks for it, till he is compelled to it by necessity; and when that happens, he is fully convinced that he has not the power of accomplishing it, but that it is the sole work of a superior agent. If you ask whose work it is? I answer, It is the work of the Holy Ghost. “We are his workmanship,

created in Jesus Christ unto good works." Ephes. ii. 10. St. Paul declares "we are saved, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. And the Redeemer declares, "except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. Some suppose, by these words, a baptism of water, and likewise of the Holy Spirit; or, as our church expresses it, "the outward baptism of water, and the inward spiritual grace;" which together produce, or are inseparably connected with a "death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." Others imagine that water and the spirit are, in this place, only different expressions for the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is indeed sometimes represented under the emblem of water; thus, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." Isaiah xlv. 3. Here the floods of water that were to be poured out, are declared to be the influences of the Spirit; and by the dry ground, on which they were to be poured, is meant their posterity, their seed. But whether by being born of water  
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and the Spirit, is to be understood being baptized with the outward baptism of water, and the inward influences of the Holy Ghost ; or whether the words, water and Spirit, are only two different expressions for the Holy Ghost ; the meaning is nearly, if not exactly the same. In both cases, the influence or operation of the Holy Ghost is the principal thing, and without which the baptism of water is of no avail.

How this great change is wrought in the heart, we are unable to comprehend. We know not how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child. We are totally ignorant of the nature of the things we see, though from observing some of the effects they produce, we hazard probable conjectures concerning the qualities they possess, and which are sufficient to direct us, in some cases, how to use them. But if the things about us are dark and inexplicable, how shall we be able to fathom the deep things of God, whose way is in the sea, whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known ? Yet to what he has condescended to reveal of this matter, it becomes us to attend.

The Author, or efficient cause of this change, is the Holy Spirit. " Except a man  
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be born of the Spirit." John iii. 5. "That which is born of the Spirit," ver. 6. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit," ver. 8. What the Holy Ghost uses; or, as we commonly express it, the instrument in his hands to bring about the wonderful change, is the word of God. "Being born again by the word of God." I. Peter i. 23. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." James i. 18. The word thus becomes the vehicle of an incorruptible, spiritual seed. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I. Peter i. 23. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John iii. 6. The proper tendency, the genuine effect of this operation, is a life of holiness. "We are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ, unto good works." Ephes. ii. 10. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galat. v. 22, 23.

Since then the word, thus used, becomes the vehicle of an incorruptible, spiritual seed, and from this proceeds a life of holiness, it follows, that in this is contained a principle of spiritual life, or the foundation of all Christian graces, as properly,

as that all the parts of a perfect man are contained in what is first conceived in the womb. And hence it is plain, beyond the possibility of reasonable contradiction, that no man can lead a life of holiness, without which he shall not see the Lord, till this seed of a spiritual life is communicated to his soul by the Holy Ghost, through the word of God. At the time of this work we are wholly passive. The work itself is called "a creation." The Holy Ghost is said "to create us;" and we are said "to be created." Nor is the liberty of the human soul, in the natural exertion of its faculties, destroyed by the work of the Spirit in regeneration; but those faculties are set at liberty to act graciously, for which before they were unable.

As we are wholly passive, and without concurrence in our first existence, or in our first formation in the womb, in order to our natural birth; and yet the future liberty of the man is not thereby prevented, but provided for, by the work of God in our first formation. So our being wholly passive, and without concurrence, in order to our first spiritual existence, under the creating power of the Holy Ghost, that we may be able to act spiritually, and yet with freedom,

dom, does not in the least hinder the soul's natural liberty, in the rational use of its faculties; but lays therein a solid foundation of spiritual life, for all manner of spiritual gracious acts, as the happy effects of our new birth.

Liberty is the freedom of acting, and is the property of an accountable being; but we must have life before we can act. To fancy therefore, that our natural liberty must spiritually concur in our new birth, is to suppose that we must act spiritually, before we are spiritual; that is, that we must act, before we have the power of acting. Agreeable to this are the words of the apostle: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned!" I. Cor. ii. 14. So that a man must be changed from natural to spiritual, or, a principle of spiritual life must be communicated, before he is even able to discern spiritual things. Accordingly he says, "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we may know the things that are freely given us of God," ver. 12. It being otherwise as impossible to discern spiritual things, as for a man to see without eyes. Marvel not,

not, says our Lord to Nicodemus, that I said unto thee, you must be born again. Do not be astonished because I enforce the necessity of regeneration. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Hast thou undertaken to instruct the ignorant, and art thy self ignorant of this doctrine, which is contained in those Scriptures thou hast undertaken to teach? Hear God speaking by one of his prophets; "I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jerem. xxxi. 33. Hear him speaking by another of his prophets; "a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. After these plain declarations, can you imagine that nothing more is meant by regeneration than an outward reformation? How can he properly be said to be born again, who continues the same in disposition, though not quite so bad in practice? Besides how inconsistent is this idea of regeneration, with  
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the fancied sufficiency of human power ; since it evidently implies, that even an outward reformation cannot be effected without the assistance of the Holy Spirit? "Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again; the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth? so is every one that is born of the Spirit." How he was born, how the great change was wrought in his heart, he is quite ignorant; but that such a change has been wrought he knows by the effects. To be brought out of darkness into marvellous light—to have an understanding given us to know him that is true—to have contrary desires, contrary hopes, contrary fears, contrary aversions to what he ever had, we may well suppose it cannot fail to attract the notice of any one in whom they are wrought. And thousands are enabled to give as distinct an account of the time when, and the means through which this great change was wrought, as of any transaction in their lives.

Many are, at different times, affected with serious things, engage in devotional exercises, and appear religious. They see things that are wrong, and for a season part with them; they consider several things as commanded,

manded, and for a time seem to be influenced by them; but it is a long while before they give themselves up to God, and walk steadily in his ways. Others, under the advantages of a religious education and example, are sanctified, as it were, from the womb. Persons of either of these characters are, in general, unable to give an account when the great change took place; yet in such the will is habitually inclined to what is good—the supreme desire of the affections is habitually to spiritual objects—and they go on, growing in grace, and bringing forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the praise of the glory of the most High. They hereby obtain a well-grounded satisfaction that they are born again; not indeed “of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God.” John i. 13. But where these effects are not produced, it is dangerous for a person to imagine that all is safe; he has reason to fear that what he has been taught and understands, his decent life, and perhaps orthodox notions of religion, will not avail him, but that he is still a child of wrath. We may here adopt the apostle’s triumphant exclamation; “Where is the wise, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the

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the wisdom of this world?" Nothing can prove it more satisfactorily, and set it in a stronger light, than that the most learned man, with the utmost efforts of human reason, cannot lay the foundation of, or advance one step in real religion, while the humble believer in Jesus Christ goes on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from glory to glory. "If then any man seemeth to be wise (or is wise in his own conceit) let him become a fool that he may be wise." I. Cor. iii. 18. Let him renounce his dependence on mere human abilities in matters of religion; let him no longer lean wholly, or principally to his own understanding to teach him the things of God, but earnestly apply for that wisdom which cometh from above, and which alone is profitable to direct.

You, who have experienced, in any measure, this change of heart, give glory to God. It is his gift, freely vouchsafed unto you, without money and without price, though it is the dear blood-bought purchase of his only-begotten Son. You have not deserved it; perhaps you did not ask for it—you did not, by any works of righteousness, recommend yourselves to his favour, and so cause him to bestow it on you. "Of  
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truth." James i. 18. He, in infinite mercy, determined that you should be "created in Christ Jesus unto good works,"—that a change of heart should take place, that you should walk before him in love. Remember then a precious talent is committed to your care, of which thousands and ten thousands know nothing; and which the libertine, the hypocrite, the formalist, the worldly, unite to decry, to brand as an enthusiastic pretension, hide it not, therefore, in a napkin, like the wicked and slothful servant, but labour to improve it to the Redeemer's glory. Your Lord will assuredly reckon with you hereafter for the use or abuse of it; and much will be expected from those to whom much is given.

You who are desirous of this blessing, consider the desire as a token for good. It is the gift of God, who mocketh no man, but intends to accomplish it in his season. He has ordained means in order to this end; wait on him, therefore, in the ways of his own appointment, with patience and humiliation, and thy labour shall not be in vain. Seek him in his ordinances, through which he usually communicates spiritual blessings; and

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though you are now fluctuated with doubts and fears, whether God will be gracious; though you now sow in tears, you shall assuredly reap with joy.

You, who know nothing of this change of heart, and are indifferent about it, would to God I might be enabled to awaken you from your security; for it is false and dreadful. There is nothing more certain than this, that if you die in an unregenerate state, you must perish. It will be in vain to say hereafter, Lord, Lord, we heard thy truth, understood and professed it—were men of good moral lives, never scoffed at thy word, but were advocates for it—were presented to thee in baptism, and also dedicated our children to thy service. Outward profession, accompanied even with morality, will avail nothing; but, “if any man be in Christ (a Christian indeed) he is a new creature.” Such only can enjoy the saving benefits of his obedience unto death. For, unless a man is born again, thus born, so as to become a new creature, to have his will and affections habitually inclined to spiritual things, though he may call himself a Christian, and be thought one by those who know him, he cannot lead a life of holiness,  
cannot

cannot be meet for an inheritance with the faints in light, and therefore cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

## DISCOURSE IV.

ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

JOHN iii. 14, 15.

*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness;  
even so must the Son of man be lifted up;  
that whosoever believeth in him should not  
perish, but have everlasting life.*

THE doctrine of Regeneration has been stated, in which the Holy Ghost renews the soul in all its powers and faculties, or works in it a principle of spiritual life; which contains in it, or may be considered as the seed or root of all Christian graces, as love, hope, joy, peace, faith, &c. &c. &c. A person is thus capacitated to discern spiritual things; to behold his danger, as a transgressor of the law of God, and liable to the penalty of disobedience; his misery as thoroughly depraved in nature, alienated from the life of God, and actually under a sentence of condemnation; and God's free love and mercy through Jesus Christ.

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These things, I say, he is now capacitated to understand and see in a spiritual light; and these things he is gradually brought to understand, according to the good pleasure of him, who ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will. A view of his state by nature and practice constrains him to cry out, "woe is me! for I am undone! what shall I do to be saved? Wherewith shall I bow myself before the Lord, and flee from the wrath to come?" To keep the soul from despair, he who convinces of sin, convinces also of righteousness, setting before the awakened sinner the glorious remedy of the gospel—Christ crucified—the Son of man lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We have, in the words of the text, a clear discovery of the method which God has appointed for the salvation of mankind—how man should be saved from eternal misery, which is the punishment due to his sins—how he should be reconciled to his offended Maker, and made everlastingly happy. And as the doctrine of a sinner's justification in the sight of God is a matter of the utmost importance, we are not left to collect it from this type only, or one or two

other Scriptures, but have it plainly delivered in many places of divine writ. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Galat. iii. 13. "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." II. Cor. v. 21. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. iii. 24, 25. "Thou hast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. v. 9. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I. Peter ii. 24. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ." I. Peter i. 18, 19. "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. Many other plain texts might be produced, all confirming the same truth; all agreeing in this, that there is not "salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

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We read, that “ the children of Israel spake against God, and against Moses. Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people; and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee, pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” Numb. xxi. 5—9.

The brazen serpent was a type of Christ. The bites of the fiery serpents represented the mortal effects of sin; and as the bitten Israelite could not be cured of his wounds, but by looking on the brazen serpent, which God had commanded Moses to set up, and trusting to it as the remedy of his providing;

so neither can the sinner be saved from everlasting destruction, (the just penalty of disobedience) but by believing in the death of Jesus Christ, as the propitiation which God has provided and set forth for the remission of sin. This is evidently the meaning of our Saviour's words,—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, or crucified: why? that whosoever believeth in him, (trusts to his death as the atonement which God has provided, and promised to accept) should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

There is naturally in the heart of man that pride which makes him refuse to submit to the righteousness of God. Though he may, through instruction, have some notion that he is a sinner, a fallen creature; yet strongly imagining that he is able to work out his own salvation whenever he pleases, he cannot find it in his heart, will not stoop to receive eternal life as a free gift. And therefore when he thinks it necessary to endeavour to avert the displeasure of God, he goes about to establish his own righteousness, to recommend himself by his works, to purchase happiness by doing something *which* he thinks meritorious. This, no doubt,

doubt, occasioned the crusades, or expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Infidels, as the inhabitants of it were called by professing Christians. This was the cause of numberless pilgrimages to the tombs of imaginary saints and martyrs—of many considerable legacies for the use of churches, for the foundation of colleges, schools, public and private charities. Men hoping by these good works, falsely so called, to atone for the sins of their past lives, and, as it were, bribe the Almighty for admission into the kingdom of heaven. And to the same cause, namely, to our natural pride of heart, are to be ascribed those several schemes of salvation, which man has \* set up in opposition, as it were, to what

\* In opposition to what God has appointed, may seem an harsh and overcharged expression; but I can see no reason to alter, or even to soften it, by supposing that the schemes alluded to are mere mistakes, from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures. One of them, at least, is manifestly adopted by multitudes who never read the word of God, or never read it with a sincere desire to know his will. The others are received by many, who, if they have read the Bible, have judged of its meaning, not according to what is contained in it, comparing Scripture with Scripture; but according to some notions they had entertained, without due examination, before they read it. And this surely is to make themselves wiser than God, and to set up their own imaginations in opposition, as it were, to what he has declared.



God has appointed. But has man the right, or will it ever be allowed him, to prescribe the terms of forgiveness to his offended Maker? By no means. It is less absurd to suppose, that a condemned criminal should dictate the conditions on which he will condescend to accept a pardon. And that man, by nature and practice, is condemned by, and under the sentence of the law, has been abundantly proved. But the advocates for unscriptural schemes of salvation will say, they do not mean to prescribe terms to God, but only to embrace for themselves, and declare to others, what they think to be his will—then, they must be ready to renounce their opinions whenever they can be proved to be false and dangerous. To be careless whether we shall be happy or miserable in eternity, is a proof of an inveterate stupidity; and if we are really anxious about what is to become of us hereafter, we cannot but desire to know the mind of God in this important point, and be careful to embrace nothing but what can be proved from Scripture to be his will.

Let us now examine some of those schemes which man has advanced in opposition, as it were, to what God has appointed. One of them is, to render to all their dues. By  
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which the advocates for it mean, to be honest and upright in all their dealings with mankind. More than this, they suppose, God does not require. But surely this is unfounded both in reason and Scripture. To be punctual in all our transactions with others is, undoubtedly, proper and commendable. It has the appearance, at least, of justice, and tends to promote the good of society, and the ease and peace of each other. But, supposing this to be done from a right principle, it is only to discharge *one* duty, and that to our neighbour; it is far from comprehending the whole of what we owe, even to him. And many are exact in their dealings with others, who are notoriously defective in other social duties: but God is entirely left out of this scheme. If we owe any duty to our neighbour, surely there must be something due from us to our Maker. Our duty to our neighbour (not to mention now the positive command of God) is founded upon our relation to him as our fellow creature, as one of the same species with ourselves. He then who made both, must certainly have a just claim of duty from both, arising from a relation between a Creator and a creature. This scheme, therefore, to be honest and upright in all our dealings with

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mankind,

mankind, cannot be the way of salvation which God has appointed.

Another comprehends something more ; namely, to be honest in our dealings with others, and avoid every thing scandalous and profane. But this scheme is almost as defective as the other ; leaving out the whole of our duty to God, except the not abusing him by open profaneness. And the advocates for it, perhaps, avoid all profaneness, more from respect to man than God ; not from reverence to the most High, but because they find it necessary to be a little decent in their conduct, when in the presence of others. To abstain from what is grossly scandalous, is certainly right ; but to suppose that we then perform the whole of our duty, is to advance what is by no means true ; for we may be free from all scandalous sins, and yet have nothing of the fear and love of God, nor readiness to obey him in all things, which all rational beings owe him from the very constitution of their nature. But farther, this, at best, is only a negative obedience. It is only to abstain from some things which are forbidden, not to do what is commanded. It is absurd therefore to imagine it to be the method of salvation which God has appointed. But  
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supposing nothing more was required of us for the future, than to render to all their dues, and abstain from every thing scandalous and profane, how are we to be pardoned, or atone for what is past? The debt we have contracted by our sins, both of nature and practice, is still against us; no satisfaction is hereby made to the offended Majesty of heaven; so that the dreadful sentence is still in force: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. The wages of sin is death. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Others imagine they may be accepted with God by repentance; and therefore determine to repent. But the most, who hold this opinion, only determine, never seriously put in execution what they acknowledge to be necessary. They determine, and determine, and fix upon this time, and then defer, and afterwards put off, and so nothing is done when death comes—and then their state is determined for ever: for there is no repentance in the grave. Of the few, however, in comparison, who not only determine, but act, it may be asked, what the

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mean by repentance? To be sorry, they will say, for what is past, and avoid the future. But this scheme is as defective, and therefore as unlikely to succeed as the former; for it does not provide a satisfaction for the transgression of the divine law. The throne of God is established in righteousness; and therefore just and true are, and must be, all his ways. Sin being committed against him, his justice demands, and must and will have satisfaction. Sin is an offence against an infinite Being, and therefore requires an atonement of infinite value. But sorrow for the commission of sin is by no means so. It is, at best, but the sincere contrition of a finite being, a poor worm of the dust, and seldom of long duration. And to abstain from the like, for the future, cannot merit, for it is only to perform what is justly due. So that, upon this scheme, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, and still condemned by the law of God.

But the well-wishers to this scheme generally suffer themselves to be deceived, through a neglect to examine it. For what they call a sorrow for sin, is generally nothing more than an uneasiness arising from the fear of punishment. When in his more serious

rious hours, in the time of sickness, or while death and eternity are thought near, conscience sets before a person the sins of his past life, his manifold violations of the divine law, and the threatenings of the Lord against sinners; an apprehension of danger will arise, which is generally accompanied with uneasiness of mind, and a resolution to abstain from sin for the future. But this seldom in comparison proceeds from a sorrow for his sin as dishonourable to God, odious in his sight, and vile in itself, but from the fear of the punishment it is acknowledged to deserve. And the resolution made to abstain from it, for the future, seldom arises from a hatred of it for what it is in itself, but because it has brought him into danger; and he thinks he has more reason to expect forgiveness if he abstains from, than if he continues in it. Accordingly, when his more serious moments are past, when sickness is removed, and he apprehends death and eternity at a distance, his fears vanish, his resolution is broken. Such are the effects of what is too often called repentance. But if such a repentance is of any avail in the sight of God, we need not despair of the safety even of Judas; for he readily made confession of his sins—frankly declared to  
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the chief priests, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. He was sorry for what he had done ; the remembrance of it was attended with dreadful agonies and bitter remorse. Moreover, he made restitution of what he had received ; he returned the thirty pieces of silver, the dear-bought price of his treason. Yet, notwithstanding his sorrow, remorse, confession, and restitution, he was proved the son of perdition, and accordingly went to his own place.

Multitudes, in the decline of life, after they have enjoyed the world as much as they could, sensible that they cannot have many years to live, and that it is necessary to provide for eternity, begin to deny themselves in some things they once much relished, and to attend the ordinances of religion. From these views, they scrupulously present themselves at public worship, admit no company on the Lord's day, and read a chapter or two in the Bible. When a little seasoned to this new way, they appear at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and then think themselves in the favour of God ; that their sins will be forgiven them, and they shall be happy after death. Alas ! little do they consider that in all this there is only the shadow of religion—that though they have something

something of the form, they are strangers to the power of godliness—that the heart is still unchanged—that they are without the grand distinguishing mark of a real Christian's love to God and their neighbour—and that, though they talk of Christ, and being saved by him, the only ground of their hope is, that they are outwardly reformed. Many, seeing that it is impossible for man, in his fallen state, to obey the law perfectly, conclude, that only a sincere obedience to it is required. They suppose that the benefit of Christ's death extends to all; that all will be delivered from the curse of the law, if they believe that Christ died for sinners; and that the method of being justified in the sight of God, and obtaining a title to eternal life, is by sincerely obeying his law. But this is to make salvation, not of grace, but of works, contrary to the express declaration of the apostle, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 20. "If righteousness cometh by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galat. ii. 21. Moreover, as the judgment of God is according to truth, and all whom he justifies are entitled to eternal happiness, because they are found righteous in his sight; if we are justified by our sincere obedience, there  
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must be as much merit in our sincere obedience, as will entitle us to eternal life. But our sincere obedience is imperfect and temporary; and heaven, as the portion of the justified, is a perfect and eternal reward; therefore we are not entitled to eternal happiness by our sincere obedience, and so are not thereby justified in the sight of God. But, if we are justified by works, it can be only by a perfect obedience: for there is not the least relaxation in the rigour of the law, in favour of a sincere obedience, or in consideration of the natural proneness of our hearts to evil: and considering the unchangeableness of God, and of the relation man bears to him as a creature to a Creator, these cannot be. But, on the contrary, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live by them." Rom. x. 5. Doeth what things? The things contained in the law; all, every one of them who acts in all things, according to their true meaning; that is, obeys them in thought, word, and deed, without the least defect or failure. Since he only, who thus doeth those things, shall live by them, shall be justified by his works: for it is written, "curst is every one that continueth not in all things that are written."

written in the book of the law to do them." Agreeable to which St. James declares, "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." But this perfect obedience is not performed by us; for, as the same apostle observes, "In many things we all offend." And all these schemes labour under this great disadvantage. They make no satisfaction to God for the transgression of his law by sin; and so tend to overthrow the several opinions they are brought to establish; namely, the necessity of works of any kind, whether perfect or imperfect, sincere or hypocritical, in order to justification. For, if the Almighty can, consistently with his justice, pardon our sins, without having satisfaction made to him for the transgression of his law, it can be no act of injustice in him to justify and entitle us to eternal life, whether we do any works to justify ourselves or no. But if we would preserve the justice of God inviolate, the rotten foundation on which these schemes are built, is evident: for they either suppose God to give us a perfect, eternal reward, for an imperfect, temporary service; or they suppose God has made that the condition of our justification, which we are unable to perform; namely, a perfect obedience

to the law. No wonder then that not one of them is to be found, as the way of salvation which God has appointed.

Suppose now that an Israelite, bitten by one of the fiery serpents, had endeavoured to cure himself, disdaining or neglecting to look to the brazen serpent which Moses had set up; what, think you, would have been the consequence? Alas! all his art, all his endeavours, would have been in vain, as his wound was mortal, and neglecting the remedy which the Almighty Physician had prescribed, he must have perished. In like manner, whosoever trusts to be pardoned and accepted with God, on any other account, than for the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ, will find himself fatally mistaken. This is the remedy which God has provided. Christ was lifted up, or crucified, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish; so that whosoever believeth not in him must perish. Ye do err, says our Lord, not knowing the Scriptures. This, though principally directed to the Scribes and Pharisees, is equally applicable to the bulk of mankind. For want of searching them, we entertain strange notions of the mercy of God. We catch at such expressions as these: "There is forgiveness with him—he will not  
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he extreme to mark what is done amiss—he desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return and live—he willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth”—and without considering their true meaning, their relation to other Scriptures, and their connection with the promise and threatenings of God; we carry our thoughts of his loving kindness to such a height, as to lose sight of his justice. Would we search the Scriptures, and ask for that wisdom which alone is profitable to direct, we might avoid so gross an error. They would inform us that he is a God of truth—that his ways are equal—that he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips—that he will in no wise clear the guilty. In order therefore to preserve the justice of God, it was necessary that satisfaction should be made to his offended majesty, for the violation of the law. Our blessed Lord therefore says, “it behoved Christ to suffer.” Luke xxiv. 46. And in the words of the text, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” There was a necessity for it; and what that necessity was, St. Paul declares, “that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Jefus. To declare his righteoufnefs." Rom. iii. 26. that is, to declare, make it known to all the world, that God is righteous and juft, and does not pardon fin without having fatisfaction made to his juftice. He had declared his full determination to punifh fin with death; and yet " he fo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten-Son, that whofover believeth in him fhould not perifh." But why did he give him to die? That he might be juft, and yet fin might be punifhed—that his juftice might be preferved inviolate, and yet man not perifh.

Let us then correct our improper notions of the mercy of God, and remember, though he is infinitely merciful, he is likewife infinitely juft. If a prince was to caufe it to be folemnly proclaimed through all his dominions, that he would punifh with death every rebel, from the higheft to the loweft of his fubjects; and nevertheless, fhould frequently pardon one or more of thofe who rebelled againft his legal authority; could his word be taken?" Could there be any reliance upon what he faid? In like manner, the God of truth has commanded it to be proclaimed to every rational creature, that whofoever believeth in his Son fhall be faved, but whofoever believeth not fhall be damned.

damned. To imagine then, that though we refuse to believe in his Son, whose obedience unto death is the alone meritorious cause of the pardon of sin and eternal life, he will make his holy word truckle to our obstinate perverseness, sooner than we should perish; what is it but to suppose that the most high God can deny himself, and is capable of becoming a liar.

From hence, then, it is undeniably evident, that a decent life, what is also generally called repentance—a regular attendance upon the ordinances of God—or indeed any works which we are able to do—cannot satisfy for our sins, and justify us in his sight; but that, if ever we are pardoned and made happy hereafter, it must be by believing in the death and merits of Jesus Christ, “whom God hath set forth a propitiation for the remission of sins that are past, through faith in his blood; and by whose obedience many shall be made righteous.”

Does our Lord say, “that he was lifted up, that we might be saved by our works? No; but that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.” If any one can satisfy for his past sins, and perfectly obey the whole law, he has, indeed, no occasion to trust to the sacrifice and righteousness of Jesus Christ,

but may, at the day of judgment, boldly lift up his head, and say to his judge, " Lord, sin cannot be laid to my charge; for I have atoned for all that I have done amiss. Let others rejoice in thy mercy, I do not want it. Behold, I have obeyed thy law to the utmost tittle of its demands, and therefore claim eternal life as a debt due to my merits. Let others boast in thy righteousness, I have no need of thy salvation."

Are you shocked at these expressions? you can scarcely avoid it. Yet in such language does the heart of every one speak, who expects to be saved by any works of his own. But though it is evident from the word of truth, that we cannot be justified by our works, yet many are unwilling to give them up; they cannot be persuaded that they have no share in our justification, and that we are justified by faith only. They are therefore willing that each should have a share in our justification; and accordingly suppose that we are justified partly by faith and partly by works. But this is only to remove the difficulty one degree backward. For if we cannot perfectly obey the law, because it requires the obedience of the whole heart, and our hearts are, more or less, set against it; for the same reason, we cannot obey a  
part

part of it. But nothing, except that which is perfect, can merit; and therefore our works can have no share in our justification. The apostle particularly excludes them from any part in this matter. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephes. ii. 8, 9. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Rom. xi. 6. Whoever supposes that our works have any share in our justification gives reason to suspect that he is grossly ignorant of the divine law, and the depravity of the human heart. It is strange that any one who reads that the law of God requires a perfect obedience—that, by nature, every imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually—and that, even in those who are born again, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, continually fullying and spoiling all its actions; should imagine that any thing we can do, can recommend or entitle us to the divine favour, can help to obtain the pardon of sin, and merit an eternity of happiness. Our church speaks a language much more suitable to the condition of fallen man. In the beginning of the Litany, she teaches us to address the divine Being in these words;



“ O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable finners.” She teaches us to acknowledge that we have broken all his commandments, and to supplicate his grace that we may act more agreeably to them for the future, “ Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.” When we approach the table of the Lord, we are taught to declare, “ we do not presume to come to this thy table, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies ;” and his manifold and great mercies are plainly expressed to be “ the redemption of the world by the death of Jesus Christ—which was a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” But what an absurdity is it to say, that Christ’s obedience unto death was a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and yet that our works are necessary to procure our salvation, or to merit any part of our justification ? She has given her sense of this matter in her eleventh article : “ We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort,

comfort, as it is more largely expressed in the Homily of justification." In which Homily she farther explains her meaning; "Christ is now the righteousness of all them that do truly believe in him; he for them paid their ransom by his death; he for them fulfilled the law in his life." Whosoever therefore would persuade you, that you can be saved any other way than by faith only in the death and merits of Jesus Christ; let his station in life be what it may—let his abilities be ever so great—his profession ever so sacred; he is ignorant of the doctrines of the church of England, knows little of the Scriptures, and less of his heart. In point of religion let no such man be trusted. You cannot indeed embrace his opinions but at the peril of your eternal salvation; and that surely is too much to hazard, in compliance to the name of any person.

To know how we are to be pardoned and accepted with God, is undoubtedly of the last importance. An happy or miserable eternity in a great measure depends upon it. If we embrace and adhere to what God has appointed, we may expect that our labour shall not be in vain; but, if neglecting this, we trust to any thing else, we have too much reason to believe that we shall

finally miscarry. Search then the Scriptures that you may know the will of God in this great fundamental article. And may he, by his Holy Spirit, who dictated them, give you to find it; and having found it, may he enable you to cleave to it, against all opposition, with full purpose of heart.

DISCOURSE V.

ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

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JOHN iii. 14, 15.

*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,  
even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that  
whosoever believeth in him should not perish,  
but have everlasting life.*

**T**HAT we can be saved only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is plainly and peremptorily declared in the text, and has been abundantly confirmed by Scripture and reason. Whoever has any acquaintance with himself, considers that the law is holy, just, and good, and that an holy and just God will and can accept of nothing in order to the justification of a sinner, but what is perfect, must despair of being pardoned and justified by any righteousness of his own, either wholly or in part; and if he thinks

of the violent opposition which has been made to the doctrine of justification by faith only, in every age of Christianity, he may at least suspect it to be the method of salvation which God has appointed. For, why has it been opposed? because it is irrational? undermines the good of society? or weakens the bonds of morality? No. When duly examined, it will be found to be the only rational scheme of religion, that it promotes, better than any other, the good of society, and best consults the interests of morality. All the cunning of infidelity, joined to all the malice of hell, have been employed against it, but to no purpose, have tried to fix on it the most infamous characters, but in vain. Whence then this opposition? Because it strikes at the root of human pride—strips man of his fancied dignity—shews him he is by nature and practice a rebel—has not the least claim to merit, or ability to save himself—and that he cannot be pardoned and made happy hereafter, but by submitting, as a condemned criminal, to the mercy of God, and accepting eternal life as a free gift. Because it tends to weaken the interests of Satan—to pull down his strong-holds—to deliver his *prisoners* from their willing captivity, and trans-

translate them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. These are the principal reasons why it has been opposed in all ages: accordingly, from the first publication of it, "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

II. Cor. iv. 4.

It is commonly objected to this doctrine, that it encourages licentiousness, and opens a door to all manner of wickedness; since it implies (it is said) that if we have but faith, it does not signify how we live. But to argue thus, discovers a total ignorance of the scriptural account of the nature of that faith which justifies. For the faith, of which the Scriptures speak as necessary in order to justification, is as certainly joined with good works, as a good tree brings forth good fruit. If faith is not accompanied with a life of holiness, they declare it to be dead, to avail nothing: it is, then, no more than an opinion, seated in the head, and not what they define it, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. 1. It is, then, the result of mere rational evidence, and confined to the understanding; not the effect of the same

power which raised up Christ from the dead, and habitually influences the whole man, his understanding, his will, and his affections. This objection, we may observe, though very popular, which every one raises, who goes about to establish his own righteousness—which every libertine has in his mouth, is by no means new; it has accompanied the doctrine from the preaching of the apostles to the present day. St. Paul (Rom. vi.) introduces a person cavilling in this manner. If we are justified by faith, we may continue in sin that grace may abound. Instead of endangering our final state, it will only magnify the grace of God; since the more numerous, the more abominable our sins may be, the more conspicuously will the mercy of God appear in pardoning them. Does the apostle agree with this? By no means; on the contrary, he strenuously condemns this conclusion, and introduces his answer with an abhorrence and detestation of it. “God forbid; how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?” The death of Jesus Christ was to abolish sin; and this design of his we promised to endeavour to carry

carry on, by the assistance of his grace, when we became devoted to him by baptism. "How then can we, who are," by profession, "dead to sin, live any longer therein?" So far from allowing ourselves in the practice of any thing sinful, "we are buried with him, by baptism, into death;" to the death and destruction of all sin; "that, like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The apostle likewise supposes that every Christian is, not only by profession, dead unto sin, but is also by grace actually delivered from the tyrannical power of it; and accordingly, he assures them, "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." By neglecting to walk according to the rule of God's commandments, 'you not only may, but most probably will be surprised into the commission of it, and, for a time, be held under its bondage; but, if you conscientiously use the appointed means of grace, it will never recover an absolute power over you. "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Ye were then entirely under its dominion, without the power or will to do any thing that is good; "but now being made free from sin,



and become the servants of God," by faith in Christ Jesus, "ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end (of believing and walking according to the divine will) is everlasting life!"

Agreeable to this reasoning of the apostle, is the doctrine of our church. The baptized person declares he is by faith brought into a state of salvation through Jesus Christ; which is to declare, in other words, that he is saved by faith only. Does he now imagine that he may live at large, because he trusts to be pardoned and accepted with God, only through the death and obedience of Jesus Christ? So far from it, he promises and vows to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; and to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.

Besides, a saving faith is always preceded by a sense of the evil and danger of sin. Till we are brought to a full persuasion of its exposing us to the wrath of God, and that we cannot be saved without trusting wholly to the death and merits of Jesus Christ, we shall never earnestly apply to him as a Saviour. We cannot suppose that the Israelite looked

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for a cure to the brazen serpent, till he felt he was wounded by the fiery serpents, and knew that the bites of them were dangerous. And, even when sensible of these things, he would hardly have used that appointed remedy, till he was persuaded he could be cured no other way. In like manner, till we are duly sensible of the great evil and danger of sin, we shall not see the want of a Saviour. "They that are whole have no need of a physician." They who are righteous in their own eyes; or cannot see any great harm they have done, will be ready to think that they can make satisfaction to God, and be, at least, justified by their own righteousness. And indeed they will not look to Christ for relief, and even when they have some idea of the evil and danger of sin, so long as they imagine that remorse and sorrow will atone for what is past, or any works of their own recommend them to the favour of God. Faith therefore implies a preceding sense of the evil and danger of sin—that it inevitably tends to the destruction of the soul, exposing it to the wrath of God and eternal misery—and that there is no recovery from this dreadful state but by trusting wholly to the propitiation which God has appointed, even the death of his

only begotten Son; and evidencing the reality of this trust, by a life of obedience to his commands. Can you now imagine that a person who sees things in this light, will venture to live licentiously—can wilfully return to his former vices and follies, and perhaps commit all manner of wickedness with greediness? What! when he knows that he provokes God to cut him off; and that if he should die in such a state he must be for ever miserable? The Israelite who had been cured of his wounds, no doubt remembered the smart and anguish of them. And can you suppose he would have chosen to go again among the serpents, have played with, taken pleasure in, and lived among them, when he was so well assured of the fatal consequence? You cannot imagine such an absurdity. In like manner, the true Christian has felt the guilt and danger of sin. He knows what it is to have a wounded conscience, to fear the terrors of an avenging God. He has, in bitterness and anguish of soul, adopted such expressions as these; “Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are  
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gone over my head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me to bear." Ps. xxxviii. 2—4. The remembrance of this, causes, more or less, a detestation of sin which occasioned it, and a watchfulness, lest he should again be overcome by it. St. Paul, speaking of a saving faith, calls it "faith which worketh by love." Gal. v. 6. Our Lord says, "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John xiv. 21. And again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words," ver. 23. "This is the love of God (says the apostle John) or the grand evidence that we love God," "that we keep his commandments." I. John v. 3. So that the faith which saves produces obedience. It is not an assent to the truth of the gospel, arising merely from the deductions of reason, but from such a view of spiritual things, as influences the will and affections to the habitual choice of and delight in them; and is accompanied with a life of holiness, from a principle of love and gratitude.

The believer trusts that his sins are pardoned by the death of Jesus Christ—that he is accepted with God, and shall enjoy an eternity of happiness, for the sake of the Redeemer's merits. Moreover, this trust is  
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attended with love and gratitude, occasioned by the consideration of what he has already received, and still hopes for. What connection now is there between this disposition of mind and a dissolute life? What encouragement can this hope, thus founded, possibly give to licentiousness? Suppose a person was cast into prison for a large debt, of which he was unable to pay the least part. Suppose him, farther, without any relation or friend, who could help him in the least degree; and he had no reason to expect but that he should live and die in a dismal dungeon, exposed to misery and want. If a stranger having heard of, and pitying him in his wretched circumstances, should visit him, discharge his debt, deliver him from prison, and, moreover, give him a title to a considerable estate, would this goodness incline him to use his benefactor ill? Would this kindness, beyond all he could possibly have expected, and almost wished, influence him to act ungratefully? We may rather suppose it would overwhelm him with wonder and gratitude—that thenceforward his benefactor's will would be his law—that he would study to know, and endeavour to conform himself to it, in all things.

Consider

Consider now the case of a sinner in his blood, sensible that he is condemned by the law of God, and fearful that the sentence of it should be executed against him—convinced of his inability to deliver himself from this wretched state, and despairing of the mercy of God. In this extremity, it is discovered to him that Christ was made a sacrifice for sin—that there is forgiveness, through his blood, even for the chief of sinners. He is raised from despair, encouraged to apply for mercy, and to hope that though his sins have been as scarlet, they may be white as snow. He is given to rely upon the word of God, and, in time, to believe that this atonement was made for him—that his sins are pardoned by it; and not only so, but that, being justified by faith, he has peace (reconciliation) with God—that God has for ever turned away his wrath from him, and will henceforth treat him as a friend—will consider and deal with him as a righteous person, for the sake of the obedience of Christ—that he is, by faith, made an heir of glory, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ. What influence, think you, will this sense of things have on him? Will it incline him to return with the dog to his vomit—to wallow in sensuality—to give his heart to the world,

and trample under foot the authority of God? No, surely; will it not rather fill him with wonder at the mercy and goodness of God, and constrain him to a cheerful, grateful, universal obedience? Under similar views the language of the apostle was, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." II. Cor. v. 14, 15. Nor is this a singular case. The experience of every age and hour proves it has this influence. Faith worketh by love, saith the apostle. He that loveth me, saith our Lord, will keep my commandments. But can a man express his love by disobedience? it is therefore a contradiction to suppose that person grateful to his Redeemer, who can allow himself in a life of sinfulness. The conduct of a believer is widely different. The sense of the mercies vouchsafed him—of the misery from which he is rescued—and of the hopes of glory set before him, subdues his heart to the love of God in Christ. He abhors the ingratitude of offending his Maker, and desires to live to him and his glory. He  
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endeavours to promote it to the utmost of his power, and labours that every thought and wish may be brought in subjection to his will.

Moreover, the person who believes in Christ is previously changed in heart. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 12, 13. So that the natural enmity of his heart to what is good, is subdued, and he delights in the law of the Lord after the inward man. Now as by nature we pursue the things we like best, so it is by grace. And as the real believer delights in the law of God, he cannot give himself up to licentiousness, for that is contrary to his inclination. The flesh indeed lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to, or at war with each other; and therefore, if the believer neglects the use of the appointed means, the flesh will, for a time, prevail. But though he may be drawn into temptation, overcome, and led captive, through carelessness or surprise, his general walk will be in the path of holiness, in an endeavour to keep a conscience



conscience void of offence towards God and man.

If faith was nothing more than a mere assent to the truth of the Gospel in general, or to a few propositions contained in the New Testament, or to a single one in particular; if, for instance, every one who was persuaded in his own mind that Christ died for sinners, and rose again, should be saved—the dreadful consequences which many apprehend from the doctrine of justification by faith only, would almost inevitably follow: for if, while his natural enmity to what is good remains, a man can believe that his final state is safe, because he acknowledges Christ for a Saviour, the propensity of his heart to what is evil, will draw him to the commission of it, and he will, most probably, allow himself in a life contrary to the nature and design of the Gospel. But if we think, a saving faith is nothing more than acknowledging what is contained in the Gospel is true, and will then condemn the doctrine of justification by faith only, supposing it to lead to licentiousness, we should well remember, that the conclusion we make is not chargeable to the doctrine, but to our ignorance of it.

Simon.

Simon, the forcerer, believed and was baptized, Acts viii. 13. he acknowledged the Gospel to be true; that it came from heaven, yet his heart was not right in the sight of God, ver. 21. but he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, ver. 23. The devils believe and tremble at the consideration that the Gospel is true; that "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1. Tim. i. 15. Nevertheless, "they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Jude ver. 6. Their faith is a mere assent to the Gospel, or an acknowledgment that it is true. Herod heard John the Baptist, and did many things gladly; yet he afterwards wilfully murdered him, at the solicitation of an artful damsel; and was himself, not long after, smote by an angel of the Lord, for robbing him of his glory. "The stony ground hearers received the word with joy, yet having no root in themselves, endured but for a while." "It is with the heart only that man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. x. 10. The faith by which we are justified and have peace with God, habitually influences the whole man, his understanding, his will, his affections.

affections. "It is the gift of God;" Ephes. ii. 8. "wrought by the working of his mighty power." Ephes. i. 19. Moreover, if we consider that the believer is "created in Jesus Christ unto good works." Ephes. ii. 10. we may find it one of the grossest absurdities to suppose that he can live licentiously. It is to suppose him to act habitually contrary to his inclinations—to suppose, that after he has experienced the great danger of doing that which is evil, and has been enabled to love that which is good; he should, contrary to his desires, void of all gratitude, and as it were, in defiance of the Almighty, habitually allow himself in what he knows will bring destruction on his soul.

It was proved that a man must be born again, or he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; and we have seen that we cannot be saved by any works of our own, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. If we carefully consider these things, we may see how they illustrate each other. One end of all religion is to make men better; to draw them from the love and practice of what is evil, to the love and practice of what is good. That religion therefore is certainly the best, which most effectually answers these purposes; and  
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that must be acknowledged to be good for nothing, or very indifferent, which leaves men just as it found them; or, only restraining their outward conduct, makes them like whited sepulchres, beautiful perhaps without, but within full of all manner of uncleanness.

The true believer in Jesus Christ renounces all pretensions to merit in himself; and seeing he is a sinful creature, obnoxious to the wrath of God without a perfect righteousness, humbly and cheerfully cleaves to the declaration of mercy through a Mediator. Why? because he sees the sinfulness of his best services, and the perfection of Christ's obedience, and knows that the judgment of God is according to truth. Does he lose any thing by thus trusting to the mercies of God? No; but to his unspeakable surprise and comfort, he finds his mind gradually enlightened, and his heart gradually changed. The Scriptures, which before were like a sealed book that he could not understand, now discover to him the glorious excellencies and perfections of the most High, the glory of God in the person of Jesus. They were once flat and insipid; but now he delights in them, sees in them unspeakable beauties, and meditates in the  
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same day and night. The experience of the mercy bestowed on him constrains him to a grateful and universal obedience. And, as his faith increases, he finds he is more dead to sin, and alive to God. This plainly points out to him where his happiness is centered, namely, in God alone through Jesus Christ. There then he endeavours to find it; and by unwearied and resolute pursuit, through the means of grace, perceives that he is more in love with spiritual things, and more dead to the things of the world. Thus growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, though his outward man decayeth, his inward man is renewed day by day; and he is gradually prepared for an eternity of happiness, greater than tongue can express, or thought conceive.

Consider now the case of one who does not trust wholly to the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ for pardon and justification; whether he avowedly rejects this way of salvation which God has appointed, or does not believe it with the heart, though he may acknowledge it to be true. He is commanded to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul. Does he perform this command? He knows he does not; he is

sensible that he does not sincerely aim at it. Some resolutions he may indeed form, and which perhaps are not wholly broken through till the next object of advantage or pleasure presents itself. He is commanded to love his neighbour as himself. How does he discharge this duty? A trivial loss will, at times, fill him with apprehensions and fears of want, though the clamorous distress of his neighbour will hardly prevail with him to part with a few pence. He is commanded not to love the world. Alas! he can really love nothing else. We suppose he keeps to the form of private duties, attends at public ordinances with decency, and sometimes imagines he has satisfaction and comfort in them. But does his fancied comfort equal the pleasure attending an increase of wealth, the smiles of the world, the satisfaction of seeing an old acquaintance, or being early in the fashion? It does not; he cannot serve two masters; and therefore, though he may carry it with civility to his Maker, the world has his heart. He is commanded to grow in grace; but he can give no evidence of any improvement he has made. If he has not gone back, he has just as much religion as he had seven years ago. How indeed can it be otherwise; when he is afraid  
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of being righteous over much? when he is continually calling out, surely that is not required; certainly we may get to heaven without all this? If you suspect the truth of what I say, look into the world, and you will see it plainly in the conduct of thousands; for once look into your own heart, and you may see it there. It would be an affront to your understanding to ask which of those two religions is the best; that which makes a man such as the word of God requires, or that which leaves him little or not at all better than it found him. We have hence an unanswerable proof that we can be justified by faith only; since the Holy Ghost is given, under the preaching of this doctrine, to work a change of heart; and the heart is never blest with increasing holiness, under the belief of any other. To attempt it, till we have faith in Christ, will be in vain. The depravity of nature will baffle our utmost endeavours. It is to attempt what we have no power to accomplish; to attempt what never was, nor can be done. On the other hand, wherever there is a true faith in Christ, it is always accompanied with a change of heart.

You see, then, how absurd it is to say, that the doctrine of justification by faith only  
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tends to licentiousness. On the contrary, the faith which justifies, naturally produces good works. It is the root and foundation of all holiness both in heart and life; inasmuch that all those actions, which the world calls good, are of no avail in the sight of God, unless they proceed from the principle, faith in God through Jesus Christ; for, without faith, it is impossible to please God. You have likewise too much reason to fear that the opposers of it, know not what it is—that they have no interest in the only way of salvation which God has appointed—in that Saviour who was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. May God awaken them to a sense of their danger, and give them to sue for pardon, while the sceptre of mercy is held out.

There are numbers who acknowledge the truth of this doctrine, and are ready to defend it on all occasions; yet it is to be feared that many, very many of them, do not believe it with that faith which accompanies salvation. Many are called believers, and think that they are, who have yet no scriptural claim to that title. The important distinction therefore is still to be proved; namely, how we are to know, whether our

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faith



faith is such as the Gospel requires; that is, whether we believe to the salvation of the soul. In this matter the Scriptures are our only safe guide; and they declare that a saving faith has, among others, these remarkable properties. A saving faith purifies the heart. The Christian believes that his sins are pardoned through the death of Christ, and that he is brought into a state of favour and acceptance with God. He is also deeply sensible of a law in his members, which strives to bring him back to his former state of bondage, even into captivity to the law of sin; and from which he has no assurance of being preserved, but by trusting to the promises of God, and evidencing that he really trusts to them, by a circumspect conduct, a conscientious use of the means appointed to that end. When he looks into himself, he finds nothing but weakness; no sufficiency to withstand, no ability to help himself against those dangerous and powerful enemies, by which he is surrounded and assaulted. And moreover, he has a traitor within, ready and desirous to deliver him into their hands. When he considers the promises of the covenant, he sees that the grace of God is sufficient for him; and that whatever he asks in Christ's name, believing, he

he shall receive ; this emboldens him to apply to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. And he experiences, to his unspeakable comfort, the faithfulness of God to his word ; for, according to his faith, so is it done unto him. He receives strength from above, by which he grows in grace, and in an increasing conformity to the Divine will. Thus, a saving faith purifies the heart.

It likewise overcomes the world. The Christian eyes, by faith, the promises of God ; “ that he will give unto his sheep eternal life—that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him—that all who believe in him shall enter into the joy of their Lord—shall inherit a kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.” He considers, moreover, that “ all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God—that they shall certainly be fulfilled—that the same Almighty Being, who has declared he will give unto his sheep eternal life, has likewise promised that none shall pluck them out of his hands. And therefore, that they shall be kept by

the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

Faith, in its effects, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. 1. It realizes eternal things in their great weight and importance. It is not a mere notion, or assent to some speculative, uninteresting proposition, which passes occasionally in the understanding; but a firm persuasion, rooted in the heart; and therefore, habitually influences the whole conduct. It is indeed the hinge on which the actions of a Christian turn. This causes him to come out from others, and be separate; and to live as to customs, fashions, recreations, like one who does not belong to society. This singular conduct causes many to think and say, that he is beside himself. Opposition from the world he expects, and has, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II. Tim. iii. 12. He manifests, by his conduct, that he is not of the world, and therefore the world hates him.

This is the true reason why his actions are grossly misrepresented, and that violent endeavours are used to lessen him in the opinion of others. But the prospect of  
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temporal inconveniencies cannot shake his resolution of pressing forward to the mark; for should he suffer ever so much in his outward circumstances, he knows he has an Almighty Friend, able to repair all his losses; who has promised that he will never leave him nor forsake him, and that he, who loses any thing for his sake, shall receive an hundred fold. The frowns, the threats, or even the malice of the world, cannot alter his settled purpose; for he hates even father and mother, when compared with his soul and the Redeemer. Nor can the smiles and favours of the world draw him. These, indeed, are more dangerous than its frowns and threats; but, he fears the dreadful hook concealed under these treacherous baits, and shuns them as snares intended to separate between God and his soul.

Thus, by faith he overcomes the world; lightly esteeming the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, when weighed in the balance with the great things of eternity. The hopes of gain, or expectation of loss; the allurements of the world, or its virulent opposition; the smiles or malice of friends or relations move him not; "he counts them all as

loss or dung, that he may win Christ; and be found in him, not having his own righteousness," which could avail him nothing, "but the righteousness of Christ," which will entitle him, through grace, to eternal glory. He looks for happiness, not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.

Happy they who have this faith, for to them are the promises sure. Happy they who sincerely desire to have it; who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Such only have a well grounded hope, that they are in a state of salvation. For they who are indifferent about these things, who look upon them merely as matters of opinion; or, who seeing their necessity, do not pursue them as the one thing needful; do not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They may be insensible, and so, at ease, notwithstanding their wants, but their case is dreadfully dangerous; "for he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

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## DISCOURSE VI.

ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

JOHN iii. 14, 15.

*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness;  
even so must the Son of man be lifted up;  
that whosoever believeth in him should not  
perish, but have everlasting life.*

IT has been proved, that there is no way discovered in Scripture to obtain the pardon of sin, and find acceptance with God, but by trusting to the death and merits of Jesus Christ; and that the doctrine of justification by faith only, is so far from encouraging licentiousness, that it is inseparably connected with holiness in heart and life. It may not therefore be improper to consider now, a little more at large, that glorious scheme of salvation, which God in his manifold wisdom and infinite mercy contrived for the recovery of fallen man. We read in this chapter, "The Son of man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. The Son of man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him

might have eternal life." So that Christ was crucified according to this Scripture, for these two purposes chiefly, to obtain for others a deliverance from the punishment due unto sin, and a title to eternal life. And these are purchased by his obedience unto death, for all who come unto God through him. It was proved at large, that, by Adam's first transgression, all mankind were brought under a sentence of condemnation: he being their covenant-head, and they, in consequence, being involved in all the dreadful effects of his disobedience. To our guilt, occasioned by the imputation of his sin to us, we have added much by personal transgression; by many gross violations of God's holy law, to which he most justly demanded a perfect obedience in thought, word, and deed; and denounced a curse against every one who should transgress it in the least instance: "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." And as every sin is an offence against a Being of infinite dignity, it is impossible that we should be able to make satisfaction to God, for the violation of his law; for nothing, but what is of infinite value, can atone for an offence against a being of infinite dignity.

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And therefore all mankind must have perished in their sins, being under the curse of God, and unable to satisfy his injured majesty, or flee from the wrath to come; if God had not in mercy provided a Saviour, who should give his life a ransom for many, and so pay the penalty due to their disobedience. For this purpose "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us—was made of a woman—made under the law—made himself of no reputation—took upon him the form of a servant—and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Christ was made a sacrifice for sin—God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin—Christ died for sinners—he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree. "The Son of man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In this manner satisfaction was made to the offended justice of God, for their every transgression of his holy laws.<sup>1</sup> But by the death of Christ, as distinguished from his obedience, there was no purchase made of eternal life; there was only a penalty paid for disobedience. And therefore, as God is holy and righteous in all his ways, it was necessary that the purchase of eternal life should be made; for, without



this, sinners however penitent, and casting themselves upon the mercies of God, through a Mediator for the pardon of their sins, could have no just claim to it.

We are bound, by nature, to obey God as our Creator; and as the supreme Law-giver, who has a right to prescribe what laws he pleases. The rule of our obedience, is that law which was written on the heart of Adam, afterwards delivered to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai, and, in later times, explained by Christ in his sermon on the mount. And to the performance of this law eternal happiness is annexed. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things shall live by them." Rom. x. 5. And that we are not to understand this of the ceremonial law, or of the law considered merely as a covenant with the Jews for temporal things, is evident from the words of our Lord: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, what is written in the law? how readest thou? and he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy  
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thy mind; and thy neighbour as thy self. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live." Luke x. 25--28. He here speaks evidently of the moral law, and of obedience to it from the heart, or perfectly, and connects eternal life with this obedience, as its proper reward. This law then requires a perfect obedience; which, from the depravity of our nature, we are not able to perform. Yet, still it was necessary that it should be obeyed perfectly, as a perfect obedience to it was the indispensable condition of eternal happiness, consistently with the justice, promise, and declaration of God. The apostle informs us, that "Jesus was made the surety of a better testament." Heb. vii. 22. A surety is a person who undertakes to make good to one, all that is justly due to him from another. As therefore a perfect obedience was due from man to God, Christ engaged for his people, that God should have justice in this particular. But, since they were unable to obey it themselves, he, as their surety, was bound to obey it. And to this the prophet alludes, "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." Isaiah xlii. 21. It was indeed made wonderfully so,  
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being performed to the utmost rigour of its demands, by Jesus Christ. And this obedience was in the room of the obedience of others; and that they, by it, might have a right to eternal life. On this account he says to John the Baptist, who, knowing him to be the son of God, was unwilling to baptize him, "suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Hence he submitted to circumcision, and to a punctual observance of the whole law; that "one jot or one tittle might in no wise pass from the law, till all was fulfilled." That this his obedience was to be placed to the account of others, equally the same as if they themselves had performed it, is evident by the words of St. Paul, "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 19. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II. Cor. v. 21. Thus, by the death of Christ, sinners believing in him, are saved from perishing; the penalty of their disobedience being thereby discharged. And by his obedience they have a right to eternal life; it being thereby purchased for them. Thus, "the Son of man was lifted up, became obedient unto death, even the death of

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the cross, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is that glorious scheme of redemption, which was contrived by God the Father, executed by God the Son, and is confirmed and ratified to the heart of every true believer, by God the Holy Ghost. And by this, the seemingly jarring attributes of God are evidently restored to perfect harmony. God is just, has satisfaction made to him, and yet the sinner is saved. God is merciful, and yet the sinner does not go unpunished, being punished in his surety. Thus, "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." This is the method of salvation which God has appointed; and which he has commanded to be preached to all the world, with this peremptory declaration, "Whoever believeth shall be saved—whosoever believeth not shall be damned!" This is what the angels desire to look into. This is the glorious gospel of Christ, of which St. Paul declared he was not ashamed; for, though devils opposed and men rejected it, he knew, by happy experience of its effects, that it was "the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16.

But, if we are justified by faith only, is not our faith the procuring cause of our justification? that, for the sake of which we are entitled to it? by no means; the procuring cause of our justification is the righteousness of Christ. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 19. How? By his obedience being imputed to them, or placed to their account. Christ, we have already observed, as the surety of a better covenant, undertook to make good or pay to God all that was due to him from those who shall be saved; to pay the penalty annexed to their disobedience, that they might be delivered from the wrath to come, and to perform the whole law in their stead, that they might have a title to eternal life.

In regard to his suffering for others, it is said, "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I. Peter ii. 24. And this his suffering for others was in itself strictly just. The prophet pronounces it to have been by the consent and act of God. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." Isaiah liii. 6. And as he bore the punishment due to the sins of his people, was considered and treated as a sinner upon their

their account; so for the sake of his obedience, they are considered and treated as righteous persons, his righteousness being placed to their account. Hence he is called "the Lord our righteousness." Jerem. xxiii. 6. and this with equal propriety, by the agreement and appointment of God himself: for, "he of God is made unto us righteousness." I. Cor. i. 30. And this imputation of the sins of his people unto him, and of his righteousness unto them, are both mentioned by St. Paul in the same verse; "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II. Cor. v. 21. This righteousness of Christ is freely placed to the account of those who shall be saved, that, for the sake of it, they may be considered and treated as righteous persons. Hence it is called "the gift of righteousness." Rom. v. 17. In the same verse it is also said to be received by those who are justified. It is moreover called "the righteousness which is of faith." Rom. ix. 30. The righteousness which is received and appropriated by faith. So that faith is the medium or instrument by which we receive the gift of righteousness, by which we are justified, and have peace with God. Know-  
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ing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for, "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Galat. ii. 16.

A man may be able to see the insufficiency of his own works for justification, the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and that this righteousness is "unto all them that believe;" yet he cannot appropriate it to himself without believing he is interested in it. Nevertheless, his believing that he is interested in it, or, as it has been often called, this act of faith does not entitle him to this righteousness; but it is by this act that he receives a title to it. The beggar who holds forth his hand to receive an alms, does not by that act, merit what he receives, but thereby only receives a free gift. The person who stretches out his arm to receive the deed of conveyance of a considerable estate, does not, by that act, entitle himself to the estate, but thereby receives the title to it. So that when we are said to be justified by faith only, it is not intended to intimate that our faith is, in any degree, the procuring cause of our justification—that, for the sake of which,

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we are justified; but the meaning is, by faith only we receive the gift of righteousness, the title to eternal happiness: that we are, for the sake of the righteousness or obedience of Christ, considered as just, righteous persons, and treated accordingly. There is no more merit in our faith, by which we receive the gift of righteousness, than there is in that act of a beggar, by which he holds out his hand to receive an alms.

But you may ask, though the righteousness of Christ is the alone procuring cause of our justification, and this is received only by faith, must we not do something to recommend us to God, that we may partake of this righteousness, and so be justified? This is to suppose that the gift of God can be purchased. It is to seek to be justified "as it were by the works of the law." For, though according to this supposition, works are not the cause of justification, they are a price paid, that the righteousness of Christ, the meritorious cause of justification, may be given. "When Simon Magus saw, that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Acts viii. 18, 19. In like manner, seeing  
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that the righteousness of Christ is the alone meritorious cause of justification, you would, by your own works, recommend yourself to God, or rather bribe him to give you an interest in it. But have you considered what kinds of works, and how many of them are necessary to recommend you to the Divine favour, that you may be duly qualified to partake of this righteousness? Attend, I beseech you. "Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ." Rom. vi. 23. We are "justified freely by his grace." Rom. iii. 24. The interest in the righteousness by which we are justified, is not obtained by purchase, or recommendation, but we receive it by the mere favour or sovereign grace of God. "For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 17. But how absurd is it to say, that we are justified freely, gratis, by a mere gift, and yet that we must do such works, perform such conditions, in order to recommend, or qualify us to receive this free justification.

But farther, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. xiv. 23.

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And “by him all that believe are justified from all things.” Acts xiii. 39. So that it is impossible to please God till we are justified, till we have received the gift of righteousness. And consequently, it is impossible for us to do any works to recommend us to God that we may receive it. Agreeably to this, our church declares “works done before the grace of God, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, for as much as they spring not of faith in Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace. Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.” Article 13.

I would now hope that every unprejudiced person, who has attended to what has been offered on this subject, is convinced at least, that the method which God has appointed for salvation, is by faith only in Jesus Christ—that the Son of man was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. I think I might rest the point here. However, before I dismiss it, I shall offer some other considerations, which may farther evidence it to be the appointment of God. One end and  
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design of religion is to make men happy; completely so in another life, partially so even in this. It lays a foundation for happiness hereafter, greater than it has entered into the heart of man to conceive; and gives more solid, rational peace and pleasure, than all other things together can possibly bestow. It delivers from the tyrannical power and dominion of sin here, which is the real cause of all the unhappiness in the world. It preserves from the displeasure of God, and eternal punishment; and assuredly leads to his favour, and everlasting glory. The established Christian, when under the influence of divine truth, is happy even in this life. He is aware of the inability of the things of this world to satisfy an immortal soul, and therefore seeks not for happiness in them. On the contrary, he renounces them as deceitful, and dangerous to the grand end he has in view, and deliberately desires no more of them than are really necessary. And yet with less he can be satisfied, if it is the will of his heavenly Father; for he has learned to submit to his will in all things. Notwithstanding these seeming inconveniencies, he has a settled peace of mind, a solid satisfaction, a lively hope, which he would not exchange for all this world can give;

give; even the prospect of eternal happiness which God has promised. In vain may the world scoff and ridicule; in vain may poverty, afflictions, or even persecutions assault; for this hope supports, comforts, and enables him even in tribulation to rejoice. He looks forward with joy—he knows the death of Christ is a full satisfaction for sin. He knows the righteousness of Christ is perfect, able to answer the most rigorous demands of the divine law. He knows that the promises are sure; and therefore he has no abiding fear of appearing before the awful Judge, though he will judge the world in righteousness, since he has to rely on now, and plead at the last day, a perfect atonement and obedience.

Looking to these he can see death disarmed of his terrors: can exultingly cry out, “O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!” Who shall separate us from the love of Christ—from the hopes of enjoying these incomparable blessings purchased for us by his merits? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword! No; these, though formidable evils, shall not be able to do it; nay, in all these things we shall be more than conquerors through him  
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that loved us. They may be painful to endure, but yet we should be gainers by them, since they would assuredly convey us the sooner to eternal rest and happiness. Has he such supports, who trusts for salvation, either wholly or in part, to his own works? No; he is a stranger to them; he is rather ready to suppose they are not to be attained. What satisfaction has he when misfortunes, afflictions, or troubles prevail against him? Can he look forward in hopes of a happy eternity, founded on the promises of God? He cannot; what he calls hope of pardon and favour with his Creator, is not hope, but presumption; because it is not founded on the Divine word, from which all true hope, relative to our eternal concerns, must spring. Does he look up to God as a reconciled father, through Jesus Christ; who has promised that all things shall work together for good, to those that love God? who has promised that he will never leave nor forsake them? No; he plainly shews that his trust is not in the most High—that the world must be his comforter; and from the wretched shifts to which he is frequently reduced—from his giddy transitions from one trifle to another, abundantly evidences that he labours not so much to remove, as to divert his mind

mind from attending to the first cause of his troubles. But can he not look forward with joy and satisfaction? So far from it he is even afraid to look into himself. He dares not examine why he flatters himself that he shall be safe and happy. He resolves all into the general mercies of God—he thinks he has done nothing that is very bad, and something that is very good, and therefore hopes God will forgive him his sins, and take him to his mercy. But what reason is there for this hope. If he was to search the Scriptures, he would see that he must appear before a perfect God, who expects a perfect obedience from all, who look to be justified by their works. If he was to compare his own actions with the law, he would find that they all fall short of this demand. The consequence of which might be, that he would see the imperfection of his obedience, and that he could not be saved without trusting to a better righteousness than his own, Yet this he will not do; will not once seriously inquire what he must do to be saved, lest he should discover the rottenness of the foundation on which he is building; lest his conscience should be alarmed, and set before him the danger of his situation. Away then with that religion which will yield no solid comfort

comfort and support in affliction or adversity —that makes us fearful to examine our state —that deprives us of the prospect of eternal happiness, and makes us catch for safety at what will assuredly fail us.

Yet of this religion, if it be proper to call it by that name, are thousands and ten thousands; prejudiced against the doctrine of justification by faith only, opposing it with all their might, branding it with opprobrious distinctions, and yet unable to refute it; obstinately set against, though their eternal happiness or misery is connected with it; resolutely stopping their ears against the things that make for their peace, and, like the deaf adder, refusing to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Of persons thus unhappily circumstanced, the apostle declares, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not; lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." II. Cor. iv. 3, 4.

But, if those who have the form of godliness, who seem to approve of what is good, and to discountenance what is bad, are yet, by trusting for salvation, wholly or in part, to their own righteousness, in a state of danger;

ger ; what must become of the careless and impenitent sinner, the hinderer and blasphemer of God's word? where must he look for safety who can now run to excess of riot, and commit all manner of wickedness with greediness? Stop, my friends, and consider. Can you approve your conduct? Will reason, morality, or any thing that is praiseworthy, justify you in wilfully violating the laws of decency and religion, of man and God? If ever you shall think, your hearts must condemn you. This carelessness and indifference about your better part will one day cost you dear. The merriment and diversion which sacred things now afford you, will be changed into bitterness and woe. You will sometime, perhaps, when it is too late, see the necessity of religion. You will then be heartily sensible that they who have endeavoured to approve themselves to God, who have been willing to part with all for the sake of Christ, were truly wise, and that you yourselves are the fools and madmen you once took them to be. Moreover, know assuredly that there is a life after this. You are not like the beasts that perish.—What is more, there is a God who will judge the world in righteousness, and at whose bar you must appear, and answer for all you shall

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have done in this life. You may now rejoice in your hearts, make free with your Maker, despise his laws, reject his mercies, trampling under foot even the blood of his only-begotten Son; but remember, that for all these things God will assuredly bring you into judgment. What will all your buffoonery and mockery avail, when, at the hour of death, conscience shall marshal your sins before you in a terrible array, and give you the prospect of an approaching miserable eternity? Will you then seek relief from your present jovial companions? Alas! they will, at best, be miserable comforters, utterly unable to speak properly to your case; or they may be engaged in business, or pleasure, and determined not to hearken to your most pressing invitations, lest the sight of your condition should deject their spirits, or make them tremble for themselves. Will you then look up for help to that God, whom you have provoked all your days, and whom you now despise? His mercies indeed are great. He *may* hear; or, he may speak terrible things in righteousness; "because ye despised my counsel, and would have none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock now your fear cometh." Prov. chap. i.

You see then the importance of these things. But a right notion of them only, will avail nothing. They must be rooted, as it were, in our hearts and influence our lives, or we shall not have a saving benefit from them. We must, in compliance with the apostle's affectionate entreaty, "Present our bodies a living sacrifice,; holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service; and not be conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 1, 2. This is the only way to prove to the heart, that the will of God is good, acceptable, perfect; and that obedience to it is a reasonable service; the only way to experience the comforts and blessedness of a religious life; the sure and only way to know that in keeping of his commandments, there is exceeding great reward. Our hearts must not be shamefully divided, but we must give them unreservedly to God, through Jesus Christ, if we would know that we are Christians. We cannot serve two masters of a contrary disposition. We cannot serve God and Mammon. Under the law, nothing maimed, nothing blemished was to be offered. Every sacrifice was to

be, in its kind, perfect and entire. Can we imagine less will be accepted now? No; God will never manifest himself to us, if we suffer the things of this world to rival him in our affections; much less, if we knowingly and wilfully transgress his laws, rather than suffer a few temporal inconveniencies. Our Saviour says, "If a man loveth father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me. If a man forsake not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." If a man hold not himself so loose to the things of the world, as to be willing to part with what in it is most dear to him, when it comes in competition with his duty to God, he has too much reason to fear that he is not a Christian. For Christ readily parted with all for the sake of his people, though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. How then can we be said to follow his example, to prove ourselves his disciples, unless we are willing to part with all for his sake?

When thus disposed we shall prove that we believe in him; shall be conscious of it to ourselves, and be able to evidence it to others. But to say that we believe in him, and yet will not trust in him; will not seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,

ness, depending upon his promise in the use of the allotted means, to supply all our temporal wants, is only to mock him and deceive ourselves. Think on this, all ye who call yourselves Christians.

You who have hitherto been indifferent about these things, but now see something of the importance of them, be persuaded to act suitably to the light you have received. While thousands and ten thousands are in darkness, thoughtless of their immortal concerns, or fancying that a round of outward performances will save them from the wrath to come, and secure to them an everlasting happiness; to you it is given to see the necessity of caring for the soul, and providing for eternity: to see that no works of your own will justify you in the sight of God, or recommend you to his favour, that you may have an interest in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To you it is given to be willing to submit to the righteousness of God, to cast yourselves on his mercies through a Mediator.

What then hinders your return to God? Are you discouraged at the remembrance of past guilt or present unworthiness? "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." And, for your encouragement, he has declared, "who-

soever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Do you question his willingness to save! You cannot be more desirous of being happy, than he is to make all for who come unto him.

When the prodigal, who had dishonoured his father and his family, by leaving them; who preferred the most infamous company to theirs, and, by keeping it, spent all his substance, and reduced himself to beggary; when afterwards having no where else to go, he was returning to his father's house, did his father form any resolution of rejecting him? No; on the contrary, "when he was yet a great way off, he saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and met him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him;" and instead of reproaching him for his past dissolute life, ordered the best robe to be brought and put on him, and a ring for his finger, and shoes for his feet; thus giving him the highest tokens of his favour.

So likewise shall your heavenly Father do unto you. Return then unto him, and thy sins and thine iniquities he will remember no more. Behold, Christ died for sinners; for such as are sensible that they have need of mercy, of an interest in his death and merits. Apply then frequently and importunately

tunately to him at a throne of grace, plead his promises, pray to know more of yourselves, and of the want of a Saviour. Wait on him in his ordinances : converse with him in his word ; and you may soon have reason to hope, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will carry it on, and perfect it in his own time and way. Walk steadily in the path of duty. Let not the scoffs and jeers of your late companions prevail with you to renounce what you know is of the utmost importance, and to return to your former sins and follies. Let them not prevail with you to return, like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. Remember this also, and may the Holy Spirit apply it to your hearts. " No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

## DISCOURSE VII.

## ON SANCTIFICATION.

## EPHESIANS ii. 10.

*For we are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

**R**ÉGENERATION, as we have seen, consists in a renewal of the understanding, the will, and the affections: These, which are by nature habitually fixed on that which is evil, are so changed by grace, as to be habitually fixed on that which is good. The necessity of this change is indispensable. "Flesh and blood," man in his depraved state, "cannot enter the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption!" I. Cor. xv. 50. "There shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomina-

abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. xxi. 27. And therefore it is peremptorily declared by our Lord, "except a man (every man without exception) be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The author of this change, or new birth, is the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The design of this change is, among other things, in order to holiness of life; that man may be able to worship God in Spirit and in truth, enjoy the comforts and consolations attending his service while here; and be prepared gradually for the worship of him in heaven, and there to live and reign with him through eternity.

The necessity of faith in order to justification has been proved at large; and the necessity of it is farther evident, because it is the root or foundation of all good works. From it they naturally proceed; they are its genuine and inseparable fruits. Faith and holiness are both necessary to our eternal happiness. By faith in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, without any works of our own, we are justified in the sight of God, are considered and treated as righteous persons, and have a right founded on the promise of God, to eternal life. And by



holiness, which is inseparably connected with a true and lively faith, we are made meet for an inheritance with the saints in light. The necessity of holiness, as a qualification for the happiness of heaven, is absolute, it being peremptorily declared, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. But, since we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God—since the carnal mind, which is the mind of all men by nature, is enmity against God; not only destitute of any principle of holiness, but in direct opposition to it; how shall man be able to perform good works, to lead a life of holiness? Not from any principle in himself, from the vigorous exertion of his natural powers and faculties, but from a divine power. Says the apostle, "We are his workmanship (the workmanship of God the Holy Ghost) created in Jesus Christ unto good works."

So that the Holy Ghost is the first author of all our good works, the giver of every principle of holiness. We must first become his workmanship, be created in Jesus Christ, renewed in the spirit of our minds, and joined to him by a living faith; before we can perform any thing that is acceptable to our Maker. Agreeable to this are many express testimonies of Scripture: "A new heart

heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. This promise does not belong to the Jews only, as if there was any thing so peculiar in their case as to require this change ; it plainly belongs to Jew and Gentile ; to all out of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, to whom God vouchsafes mercy ; and the reason of the promise is, no doubt, founded in the necessity of such a change, in order to their being qualified to enter into the kingdom of heaven. " God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." II. Theff. ii. 13. " Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. " According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus iii. 5. We have these pertinent expressions in our church service. " Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his

holy Spirit ; that those things may please him, which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy." (Absolution) " That it may please thee to give us true repentance ; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorancies ; and to endue us with the grace of thy holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy word." (Liturgy) And, in the tenth article it is declared, that " we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God, by Christ, preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good."

So that however common it may be to declare the contrary, we have neither ability nor inclination to perform good works till it is given us from above ; till we have received the grace of God, the assistance of the Holy Spirit. " A corrupt tree, says our Lord, cannot bring forth good fruit." Mat. vii. 8. Notwithstanding all the pains that may be bestowed on it, the fruit will still be bad. You may dig about, water it, and take away the dead dying wood, lop off every luxuriant branch, yet it will not answer the purpose ; *after all your trouble, the fruit may be a little better to the sight, and not quite so bad to the*

the taste, but it cannot be good. Thus a careful education, religious instruction, good example, and other things united, may restrain from gross sins, and even occasion the form of godliness; but can never enable a person to lead a life of holiness; the reason is plain. All holiness proceeds from a love of what is good, but our hearts are naturally prone to that which is evil. Till then this inclination to evil is subdued, and the love of what is good implanted in the heart, we cannot love what is good, and therefore cannot lead a life of holiness. So that before it can bring forth good fruit, the tree must be made good. The natural bias of our will and affections must be changed. Old things must pass away, and all things become new. "We must become his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works." By regeneration the faculties of the soul are endued with an inclination to what is good; a spiritual principle is communicated; "For that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." John iii. 6. A person thus changed is inclined to a life of holiness, and accordingly desires to live it. But notwithstanding this inclination; he has no independent power in himself of acting agreeably to it; he stands in need of his assistance, who fir

wrought it in him. He who worked in him to will, must also work in him to do. We are dependent on him for all things, and are to look up to him for fresh supplies of all we want. Accordingly, we are taught to pray for our daily bread; not only for the meat that perisheth, but for the bread of life; that which cometh down from heaven. Whatever stock of grace we may imagine we have, and though we may be tempted to think that it will continue vigorous and lively for a long season; we may be assured that it will not last one day unimpaired, without access to God through the Mediator, and a conscientious use of the appointed means for an additional supply.

Grace is a talent committed to our care, and is to be improved to the glory of him who gave it. We then improve it when we acknowledge our dependence on him who gave it, when we seek unto him for more, when we walk in the ways of his appointment. As he, to him shall be given, who improveth what he hath; if we thus act agreeably to the Divine will, we shall be blessed with an increase, shall grow in grace in the knowledge and love of God. Here then is the spring and fountain of all holiness in *heart and life*. It is begun by grace, in the  
renewal.

renewal of the understanding, will, and affections, to the knowledge and love of what is good; and carried on by grace, in the continual assistance of the Holy Spirit. And he whose understanding, will, and affections are renewed to the knowledge and love of what is good, may be assured that, in a diligent use of the appointed means, this blessed work will be increased. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philip. i. 6.

Hence we may see that the work of sanctification is progressive; that the believer advances from strength to strength, from grace to grace; but this progress takes place only, when he is in the path of duty. We are not to imagine that this work meets with no checks or interruptions. A careless walk with God, a neglect of the appointed means, will as surely weaken his spiritual strength, and cause him to decline, as the not taking of proper sustenance will impair his body. A fondness for temporal things, a frequent use of fashionable amusements, a dalliance with temptation through confidence of his strength, as naturally tend to plunge the soul into the defilements of guilt, as the taste of poison tends to corrupt the body. *The Christian*

is called upon to "lay aside every weight and the sin which most easily begets him, and to run with patience the race that is set before him; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of his faith." Heb. xii. 42. When he acts thus, he not only keeps his ground, but goes on; but when he acts otherwise, he goes backward, stumbles, slips, and falls. Hence believers in all ages have fallen into sins, and many into those of the grosser kind, to their own great distress, and the reproach of religion. It is absurd to imagine that a regenerate person cannot sin. Scripture, history, almost every day produces mournful examples to the contrary. There is scarce a character upon record without a foul blot. If it is asked how can these things be, when the will and affections are habitually inclined to that which is good? the answer is ready; though in a regenerate person the body of sin is crucified, it is not destroyed; it has received its death's wound, but it is not dead, though it cannot finally have dominion, for the promise is, "sin shall not have dominion over you," yet it may prevail so far as to wound, cast down, bring under bondage, lead captive. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to, *in continual opposition to each other.* A  
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dying man may sometimes exert more strength than one in perfect health. And when a Christian is off his guard, he will, at times, experience the strength of remaining corruption, to his shame and hurt. But where there is a circumspect walk with God, a cleaving to him with full purpose of heart, decays and distresses will be avoided, and the work of sanctification will gradually increase.

But if we are saved by grace through faith, if we are justified and accepted as righteous persons, by believing in the death and merits of Jesus Christ, what occasion is there for holiness? Our final state is already secured: Our sins being pardoned, and we having a title to eternal life, what necessity is there to perform good works? I before mentioned, that holiness is necessary, that we may be meet for an inheritance with the saints in light. And now, I observe more particularly, that good works are necessary, because God hath commanded that we should walk in them; “furthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God,

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even your sanctification." I. Theff. iv. 1, 2, 3. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that ye constantly affirm, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men." Titus iii. 8. Holiness therefore, or the performance of good works, is necessary, from the command of God. And when through carelessness or wilfulness it is neglected, then the authority of the supreme Saviour, who is able to save and to destroy, is despised.

The necessity of holiness is evident from the purpose or decree of God; "He hath chosen us, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephes. i. 4. The principal design of God in ordaining any to eternal life, is, that, by holiness, being made meet for an inheritance with the saints in light, they may be for ever happy, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Holiness and happiness are inseparably connected. As then, without holiness no man shall see the Lord, so likewise without holiness no man can be happy.

It is necessary likewise in order to shew forth the praise of God even in this life, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father

Father who is in heaven." Mat. v. 16. It recommends religion, by proving that there is a truth and reality in it. It glorifies God, by shewing that he is greatly to be feared, loved, depended on, obeyed, and had in reverence. And therefore is often the occasion of causing many to consider their ways, and be wise, and to turn their feet unto his testimonies.

The necessity of sanctification, or holiness, is farther manifest, as it is the grand evidence of our being in a state of salvation. By the entrance of sin into the world, the divine image was destroyed in the soul, our nature became wholly polluted, But all who are in Christ, are new creatures; all who are chosen for eternal life, are predestinated to be conformed to his image. They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. It is in vain therefore to suppose that we are chosen in Christ, or that we believe in him, however moral and inoffensive we may be in our lives, however regular and frequent in the performance of private duties, or in our attendance on public ordinances; if we do not experience a change in heart, something of the temper of Christ, a renewing in the spirit of our minds. Accordingly, all who are chosen to salvation, are chosen to  
holiness

holiness; "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II. Thess. ii. 13. And therefore it is a dangerous delusion, an awful presumption in any to fancy themselves in the number of the elect, if they do not find that they are actuated by a Spirit of holiness.

The Scripture speaks of no election to salvation, (to partake of the favour of God here, and happiness with him hereafter) without holiness. They therefore who imagine they are elected to salvation, and yet know nothing of an habitual disposition to obey the commands of God (the only proof of holiness) who are not careful to walk before him unblameably in love, to have a conscience void of offence, put asunder what God has joined together, and so wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.

But if sanctification is begun and carried on by the Holy Spirit, are not we mere machines in this matter? By no means; the Holy Ghost communicates a principle of spiritual life, and thus lays the foundation for action; and afterwards gives grace and strength to help in every time of need; but man is the agent. And therefore we are commanded to "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,

knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, &c. II. Pet. i. 5, 6.—To “grow in grace,” II. Pet. iii. 18.—to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” II. Cor. vii. 1. —to be “perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matt. v. 48. That is, to use the help the Holy Ghost gives, in order to acquire the Christian graces, to accomplish the great ends for which it was given. When the Holy Ghost is said to sanctify us, he is spoken of as the communicator of all grace, the giver of every good and perfect gift. When we are commanded to work out our own salvation, we are called upon to improve the grace he vouchsafes for that purpose. So that we are to endeavour to grow in grace, as much as if it depended entirely upon ourselves, without the least help from above; and yet, with a deep sense of our own inability to do any thing, as from ourselves, and a firm reliance on God for his promised assistance. Moreover, the implanting and frequent cherishing of a desire to that which is good, cannot be that we should be idle and inactive; it must have a sphere for action. The proper objects for it are the commands, the glory of God, the salvation of our souls; good works which

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in.

Thus, being renewed in the spirit of our minds, we are prepared to perform unto him a reasonable service; and by habitually exercising the desire to what is good on its proper objects, we gradually learn that his commandments are not grievous, that his service is perfect freedom. We properly endeavour to fulfil the law by love—to love him with all our hearts—and, for his sake, and in obedience to his command, our neighbour as ourselves. But our hearts being by nature destitute of a principle of holiness, alienated from the life of God, and narrowly contracted by selfishness; that we may be able to have respect to his commandments, to walk before him unblameably in love, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. And in order to carry on this glorious work; that we may be more renewed, more conformed to the divine image, and more intent ~~on~~ glorifying him in all manner of holy conversation, he hath given us, as proper instruments through which he usually communicates spiritual blessings, his word and ordinances.

If we review these discourses, we may find it proved that we all sinned in Adam—  
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are by nature children of wrath—that we all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God by personal disobedience—that the wages of sin is death; and therefore we are under the curse—that we must be born again of the Spirit, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven—that we can be saved only by faith in the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ—and that when this faith is sincere, and avails unto justification, it is accompanied with a life of holiness. When the will and affections are inclined to spiritual things, a life of holiness regularly follows. And whosoever improveth what he hath, to him shall more be given; a growth in grace must ensue, which is indeed a grand and infallible mark of a true Christian.

But though it is the duty of all natural men to do their utmost in moral performances, and their labour shall not be in vain with respect to temporal rewards; yet a Christian life in Gospel-holiness, the end of which is eternal happiness, they can never attain, without a renewal of their will and affections. This therefore as a truth of God's word, they ought as rational creatures to be convinced of, to seek unto God for his Holy Spirit to renew their nature; and to wait for his mercy in the reading of his word, and  
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hearing his Gospel; as under its ministration his Spirit is given for this end. For without a renewal of our nature, we can never lead a Christian life in holiness, nor can we make any advances therein. While we attempt to mortify one corruption, another will increase in strength. Bid the man trembling with the palsy keep himself steady; he cannot, his disorder baffles his utmost endeavours. In like manner, when we attempt to lead a life of holiness in our own strength, the depravity of our nature continually foils us. We indeed draw near to God with our lips, but our hearts are far from him. The enmity in our nature to what is good, prevents us from relishing spiritual duties, from performing them with delight. Wherefore, finding ourselves unable to advance without knowing the real cause, which is the depravity of our hearts, we endeavour to persuade ourselves that a life of godliness is not necessary, that it is only being righteous over much. And as the disrelish of spiritual things will make us think a few of them sufficient, so the love of temporal things will persuade us that the enjoyment of the world is not unlawful—that the pursuit of riches is only to make a necessary provision for our families; and a round of fashionable pleasures nothing more than

than necessary amusement, in order to relax the mind. Hence it is that we grow satisfied with the mere form of religion—excuse our miscarriages, by calling them the infirmities of nature—and extol the mercy of God at the expence of his other attributes.

How preposterous and absurd is it then to exhort us to a life of holiness, without informing us how we are to be able to lead it—without acquainting us that our nature must be renewed by the Holy Ghost—that this is the happy lot only of believers in Jesus Christ—and that none believe in him, till they have seen themselves sinners, condemned by his law, and that they can be saved only through him.

Ability for holiness of life is so far from being in our own power, that it is absolutely the effect of a promise of the covenant of grace: “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” Ezek. xxxvi. 27. The verse immediately before this is, “a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” So that agreeably to these promises compared with the context, this ability is not only not in our own power, but we cannot

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have it, till we are reconciled to God, and taken into covenant with him. But there is no reconciliation to be had, no admission into covenant, without "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." We must first see that we are sinners, that we need a propitiation, and when we have been enabled to submit to the righteousness of God, to embrace the declarations of mercy through a Mediator; then, and not till then, God will fulfil his promises in the covenant, "will put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes."

Where then is the boasted dignity of man? the extolled sufficiency of reason to carry on the work of Christianity, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit; when he must see he is a rebel, and utterly unable to help himself—when he must sue for mercy, as a condemned criminal, and renounce all pretensions to merit, before he can begin a life acceptable to God? Our disorder is the depravity of our hearts, the corruption of our nature. When we see this—when we see also that God is our enemy, by reason of our transgressions, self-preservation will teach us to seek for a remedy, that we may flee from the wrath to come. A propitiation is provided for the remission of sins that are past,

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